The Simonides Affair
The Russian Investigations

by Kevin McGrane

Constantine Simonides during the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Cambridge the first week of October 1862, four weeks after his letter in the Guardian *had launched the 'Simonides Affair'*

Image colorized from sepia original Add MS a/40/90a
Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge

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Preface

This work follows from the former monograph *A review of* The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus *by Dr W.R. Cooper against detailed background of the discovery of the Codex*, together with supporting material in *Is David W. Daniels' "Codex Sinaiticus Evidence" a Fake?*, both in 2018.

The 2018 *Review* announced a forthcoming monograph entitled *Codex Sinaiticus and the Three Constantines*. This present work is not that monograph, but is an interim report to address the published claims that there was little or no testimony sought from witnesses to Simonides' activities in 1840. That, of course, fits well with the conspiracy theory mindset, but the falsity of such claims is evident from this article.

The 2018 *Review* gave extracts from a letter sent by the St Panteleimon monastery to the Russian magazine *Православное Обозрение* refuting Simonides' account, but the whole letter is reproduced here. This present work also includes the testimony in 1863 of hegumen (abbot) Gerasim and twenty named monks of the monastery who all knew Simonides there in 1840 and were still alive in 1863. Also included are the discussions between the Metropolitan bishops of Moscow and Novgorod and St Petersburg and that of the archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin) who interviewed the witnesses, with extracts of his daily diary covering his investigatory trip to Mount Athos with diplomat Alexei Kumani in March 1863.

The scope of this present work is centred around events in 1863 at the height of the 'Simonides Affair'. However, the subsequent pivotal role of Antonin (Kapustin) in the transfer of ownership of Codex Sinaiticus can hardly be underestimated. Antonin was being lined up as an interlocutor for this as early as December 1862, and his trip to Athos in March 1863 to speak face-to-face with numerous witnesses of events in 1840 was important personally to assure him that he was dealing with a genuinely ancient and precious document and not something cooked up in his own lifetime. In the passion of interceding for the Sinaites, who were losing something precious and unexampled (i.e. an ancient and complete Greek New Testament), Antonin involuntarily spilt ink on his letter to ambassador Ignatiev and did not have (he claimed) the time or energy to rewrite it. But a more detailed account of the transfer, fascinating as it is, is beyond the scope of this present work, which focuses on provenance.

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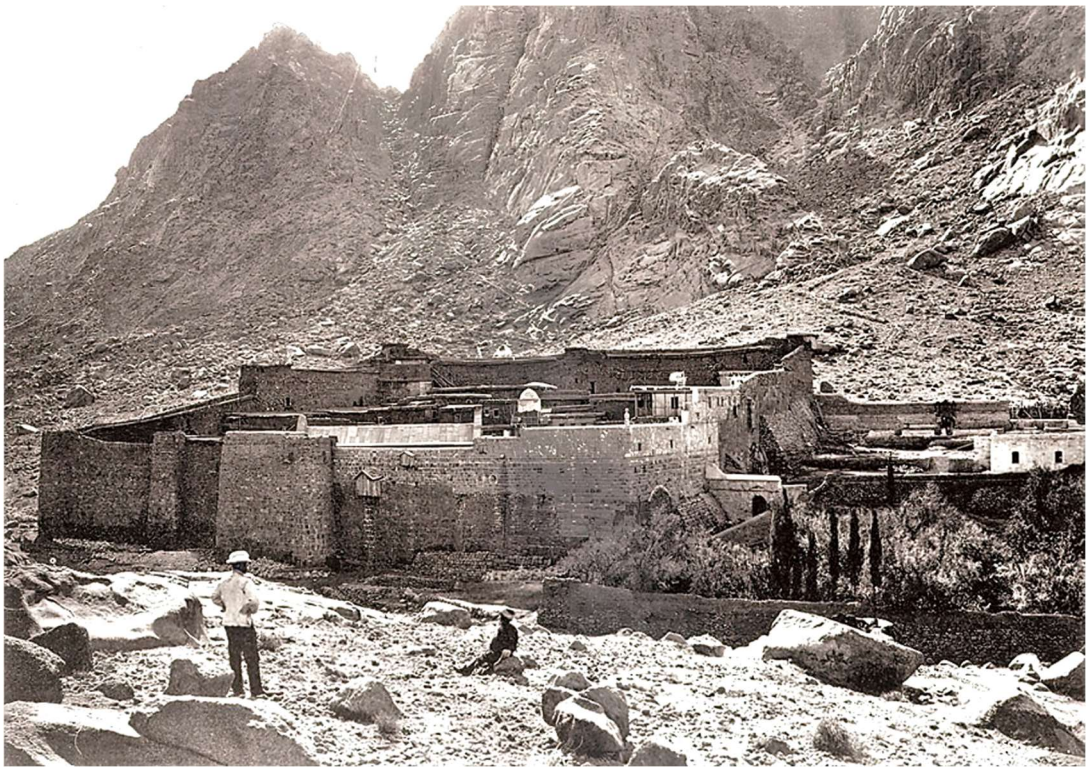

St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, 1868

The Background to the Simonides Affair

St Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai is the oldest Christian library in the world, and second only to the Vatican Library in the number of manuscripts. Because of its remote location and fortification it has withstood wholesale plundering of its treasures over the centuries. It was this that drew the Saxon scholar Konstantin Tischendorf to the monastery in hopes of discovering very ancient manuscripts. On his first trip to St Catherine's monastery in 1844, Tischendorf noticed a block of 117 contiguous vellum leaves,[1] which he recognized as a portion of the Septuagint. He knew that this contiguous block was a part of a larger codex because of the evident remains of a larger binding, but he saw nothing of the larger 'parent' codex. Being written entirely in uncials, the codex would be at least 1000 years old, and Tischendorf judged that the manuscript was produced in the fourth century, pre-dating all other known 'Great Uncials', including Vaticanus and Alexandrinus. He removed 43 leaves from the top and bottom of the contiguous block and took them to Leipzig.

[1] Q34 f.8, Q35-Q.49. Tischendorf's claim twenty years later that there were 129 leaves whose content included the minor prophets (i.e. Q57 and Q58) is completely false, and is contradicted by Tischendorf's own earlier accounts, public and private, and all the available evidence. Sadly, later fabulous statements by Tischendorf have been uncritically accepted and repeated by scholars without any investigation of the facts.

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The following year the Russian archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky visited St Catherine's monastery to catalogue its treasures. He saw the remaining leaves that Tischendorf had seen and left behind, but also a great deal more from the same codex: the minor prophets, the Psalms, the wisdom literature and Job, the entire New Testament, the epistle of Barnabas and the first part of the Shepherd of Hermas, none of which Tischendorf had seen. Uspensky considered it a fifth century production and described its contents in his notes. He returned in 1850 and spent considerable time studying this codex and made colour plates of it. However, Uspensky was unable to publish his findings until 1856 due to Russian censorship.

Meanwhile, Tischendorf, knowing nothing of Uspensky's visits and findings, returned to the monastery in 1853 hoping to find the 74 leaves he had left behind in 1844 and to look for additional ones from the same codex. He was unable to locate any because, unbeknown to him, Uspensky had given instructions to guard the codex securely away from visitors. Tischendorf conjectured that the codex had been found and removed by another scholar, and that news of its discovery must soon appear in the learned journals. But as the years passed without any notice in the literature,[2] Tischendorf concluded that the remainder of the codex must, after all, still lie undiscovered at St Catherine's, and he was very keen to obtain it.

The Russian government were very keen in another way: from a report that Uspensky had lodged with the Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1847, they knew that the codex was a 'Great Uncial' whose New Testament was better preserved than any other extant. Uspensky recommended removing the codex on loan via a Russian delegation of scholars. The aim of the Russian government and Tsar, however, was for a transfer of ownership, not a mere physical transfer of the codex to Russia on temporary loan. Aware of Konstantin Tischendorf's urge to return to St Catherine's, the Russian government decided instead to fund him to make a third visit in 1859, not disclosing to him that they knew of its existence and its contents. Accordingly, when at St Catherine's the codex was put in Tischendorf's hands to inspect in January 1859, he incorrectly believed that he was the first modern scholar to see it.

Tischendorf removed the codex to Cairo where he and two other Germans transcribed and photographed it. Having shown it off to numerous visitors there, including to an Englishman who offered to buy it, Tischendorf could not forbear claiming that he was its discoverer, and he made such a claim in the European newspapers from mid-April. In August, however, the Russians broke the news to Tischendorf that they had full prior knowledge of the codex before they had commissioned him, and they showed him Uspensky's published descriptions of it.

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[2] Tischendorf did not, however, check the Russian literature. He also dismissed Tregelles, who reported to him that a Briton had viewed the 'parent' codex at St Catherine's in 1845.

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They also sowed in his mind that a transfer of ownership was desirable for all concerned.

Tischendorf removed the codex from Egypt in mid-October 1859, having given the monastery officials a solemn written assurance (which he could never fulfil) that he would return it immediately upon request. He carried the codex through Europe to St Petersburg where the Russians photographed it and started work on a facsimile. In 1860 Tischendorf published the first detailed account of the codex, and included an image in realistic facsimile. Constantine Simonides, a notorious Greek manuscript forger who was then in England, was made aware of this facsimile, and started spreading a narrative that he recognized this as his own work that he had produced on Mount Athos in 1840 at the St Panteleimon monastery (also known by the Russians as 'Russik' and the Greeks as 'Rossikon').

In 1862 Tischendorf removed the codex to Leipzig to work on it in his own home and to have realistic facsimiles produced more efficiently in Saxony. There in the summer of 1862 he received the English scholars Tregelles and Bradshaw who separately viewed and studied the codex for several days. To such experts of manuscripts it was blindingly obvious that there was no truth in the claims of Simonides. A letter by Tregelles to F.J.A. Hort (a scholar and also a friend of Bradshaw) appeared in the *Guardian* newspaper on August 13, stating that 'the story of Simonides that he wrote the MS. is as false and absurd as possible.' This elicited a lengthy response by Simonides in the *Guardian* on September 3, 1862, which publicly launched the 'Simonides Affair'. In a letter appearing in the *Guardian* on January 28, 1863, Bradshaw backed up Tregelles and confirmed the impossibility that Simonides was the creator of Codex Sinaiticus, stating that he was 'as absolutely certain of the genuineness and antiquity of the Codex Sinaiticus as I am of my own existence.'

The relative failure of English but success of Russian investigations

In 1875 the scholar F.H. Scrivener looked back at those days and wrote that 'It is humiliating to recall the circumstances of the controversy which ensued in England, where our Greek was then sojourning, for elsewhere the fable was received with blank and absolute incredulity.'[3] This statement could hardly be accurate unless it were true in Russia, the main place 'elsewhere' where most was at stake. Let us not forget that the Russian archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky had extensively studied the Codex as far back as 1845 and declared it to be a fifth century production unexampled among great uncials; that in 1863 the Codex itself was in Russia, having been extracted from Sinai by one funded by the Russians, the Russians also meeting

[3] F.H. Scrivener, *Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament*, (Cambridge, 1875), p.36.

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the very high costs of producing a luxury facsimile of it; and that the Tsar and Tsarina themselves were personally invested in this enterprise and would be seen to have been duped if Simonides' account was true. To these facts can be added that Simonides spent several years in Russia (including a visit in 1858 before coming to England), where he claimed to have been serving the Russian government; and that he claimed to have been commissioned to write a manuscript intended as a present for the Russian Tsar, in a monastery that was now predominantly Russian. It could hardly be denied that there was an overwhelmingly Russian flavour and connection to all the affairs concerning Codex Sinaiticus, and in Russia a great deal was at stake. By comparison, in England the question was merely an academic one.

But in Russia, it was not Simonides' account that was 'received with blank and absolute incredulity': it was the behaviour of the English that was received so. In Russia the account by Simonides was considered improbable, yet necessary to be thoroughly investigated. The Metropolitan of Moscow wrote to the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod[4] that 'a decisive judgment on the subject of the dispute can only be pronounced after examining the case',[5] which examination was then put in train. The ensuing Russian examination of the case was by far the most thorough of all, involving Church and State at the highest levels, and putting English efforts completely in the shade.

It is surprising that more effort was not made *in England* to obtain testimony from the St Panteleimon monastery on Mount Athos, where Simonides claimed to have written the Codex in 1840. Personal testimony from those who were acquainted with Simonides and his actions in 1840 was most valuable evidence of all.[6] The Russians

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[4] J.B. Dunlop, *Staretz Amvrosy* (1972): 'Peter the Great put the Russian Orthodox Church into the fetters of an extreme Erastianism. The Patriarchate of Moscow was abolished [1724] and power over the Church was vested in a state-appointed body, the Holy Synod. The head [Chief Procurator] of the Synod had to be a lay man but did not have to be—and was not always—a believer. The aim was to make the church a department of State in a thorough manner…' The Holy Synod was composed of the three metropolitans (Moscow, Kiev and St Petersburg) and other bishops appointed by the Tsar for fixed terms. Under the Chief Procurator was a large secular bureaucracy. During the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55) the Church was brought even more under the control of the government by Count Nikolay Aleksandrovich Protasov (Chief Procurator 1836-55), a despotic former cavalry officer, who ran it as a secular government department. Protasov was not interested in theological matters and was uncomfortable in the presence of persons of unimpeachable convictions such as Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, now venerated as an Orthodox saint. Protasov so humiliated Filaret in 1842 that the Metropolitan declined to attend any further meetings of the Holy Synod.

[5] Letter of Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, to A.P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, January 4, 1863.

[6] In making these points we are far from adopting the stance of the conspiracy theorist David W. Daniels, who went into print in 2021 (*Who Faked the "World's Oldest Bible"?*) stating that 'not a single Englishman, German, Greek or Russian ever lifted a finger to verify or disprove Simonides' [stories]… by consulting the people who were still alive'. This ill-informed statement, made by one who himself

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at once realized this, and made considerable efforts to get at the facts from witnesses who were still alive, and they obtained the testimony of many and recorded their details. In reassessing the history of the 'Simonides Affair' today, we cannot go back and interview eyewitnesses who died well over 100 years ago. But we can be sure from extant records that copious eyewitness testimony was obtained, and we can be sure exactly who these eyewitnesses were. It is the purpose of this present paper to demonstrate this, name them and give their personal details together with their testimony.

Only one *purported* eyewitness apparently came forward to defend Simonides: the priest-monk Kallinikos. But he was never in the least credible, and was rather easily flushed out as an *alter ego* of Simonides himself. Kallinikos was an excellent eyewitness to everything that Simonides did only because he was none other than Simonides himself, and the master forger had his time cut out creating fake correspondence with fake dates with this fake personage to generate an fake backstory.[7] When scholars rightly discerned that Kallinikos was a fraudulent device, Simonides blustered in the *Guardian* of January 21, 1863, 'What then have you to oppose to the evidence of living men occupying the rank of priesthood…Do you disbelieve the attestations of the Patriarchs, Archimandrites and monks of the Eastern Church?'. Simonides had thrown down the gauntlet, but it would not be the English who would take it up. While English scholars for months tried to show that this was just a bluff, the Russians had already set in train all the necessary evidence gathering that would shortly expose Simonides (and his *alter ego* Kallinikos) as a liar from the testimony of living men, all Eastern Orthodox monks, many in holy orders. The hegumen (or abbot) of the monastery in 1839/40 was still alive and testified against him, as did twenty other eyewitnesses of his time at Athos back then.[8]

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never lifted a finger to verify or disprove Simonides' stories by consulting the available evidence extant in Russia, is false, as this paper demonstrates.

[7] There are some undated entries in the Lambros catalogue showing books in the St Panteleimon library copied by one or more monks signing as Καλλινικος μοναχος. But these have no connection to any Καλλινικος ἱερομοναχος for three reasons: (a) each is a lay monk, a μοναχος, not an ordained ἱερομοναχος; (b) Monastery records confirm that there was no ordained priest-monk Καλλινικος ἱερομοναχος at the St Panteleimon monastery in the first half of the nineteenth century; and (c), we know from monastery records who the copyists Καλλινικος μοναχος could be: Konstantin Ivanovich Buras (1822-91), a Greek from Spetses, diocese of Hydra, who entered the St Panteleimon Monastery in 1848; and Konstantin Nikolaevich Moskovidi (1830-96), a Greek from Karitena, diocese of Gortynia, who entered the St Panteleimon Monastery in 1850. Accordingly, the *terminus a quo* for nineteenth century copies ascribed to Καλλινικος μοναχος and produced in St Panteleimon cannot be earlier than 1848, which is far too late to be an eyewitness to anything in the period 1839-41.

[8] All the witnesses, many known to be deeply religious men of the highest integrity, were fully identified in the transcript of their testimony openly published in 1888, some of them still being alive at that date, with which was provided the location in the archives of the Holy Synod (Inventory № 60,

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Reactions in England

To get a hearing Simonides shamelessly prevailed upon and abused the British sense of 'fair play'. However, what is really humiliating is that the 'Simonides Affair' dragged on *in England* as long as it did, not so much because of 'fair play' or even credulousness of the English but because of their failure to obtain direct witness testimony from those whom Simonides claimed were involved in an enterprise to produce Codex Sinaiticus.[9] Several critics of Simonides rightly pointed out that his evidence was largely circumstantial, and yet the critics *in England* made the needless error, initially at least, of meeting him on *his* chosen grounds and avoiding direct testimony, so that the whole affair descended into a farce of arguing circumstantial details, which often could not be validated.

It is as shameful as it is absurd to read the reaction of the British press and some in government, which was far more gullible than Simonides could possibly have expected or hoped for. A mere three days after Simonides' letter appeared in the *Guardian*, the *St James's Chronicle* newspaper thought the matter to be all but decided against Tischendorf without needing to go to the trouble of even the slightest investigation of the facts:

> Much has been said lately of a famous Codex which Professor Tischendorff had found in a monastery at Sinai, which was pronounced by the learned in such matters to be of most venerable antiquity, dating at least as early as the fourth century, is now being printed under the patronage of the Russian Government, and was expected to contribute to the elucidation of difficulties that had long perplexed Biblical scholars. In Thursday's *Guardian* appears a letter of M. Simonides, who declares that he himself transcribed the whole of this notable *Codex Sinaiticus*, and he gives such a circumstantial account of the reasons which induced him to undertake the task, and of the whole history of the affair, that there must, we apprehend, be an

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Documents №14 and №15) of their original letter written in Greek and its accurate Russian translation. Three years later many of these men were listed with individual entries in an unrestricted publication as each being 'Свидѣтель о лживости заявленій грека Симонидеса относительно подложности синайской рукописи Библіи', or similar, i.e. 'witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides regarding the spuriousness of the Sinai manuscript of the Bible', see Appendix 1.

[9] The present writer was the first to do so in 2018, over 150 years later, with extracts from the letter of March 4, 1863, written by the monks of St Panteleimon denying the fable and denouncing Simonides. J.K. Elliott in the preface to his resourceful 192-page book on the 'Simonides Affair' states that his monograph 'attempts to show how the contemporary newspapers and journals analysed the stories of Simonides and Tischendorf', yet the work is heavily Anglo-centric and never once mentions the Russian perspective on this Affair, the correspondence that took place in Russia and the detailed investigations and their outcome. It is to redress the balance somewhat that this present monograph is offered.

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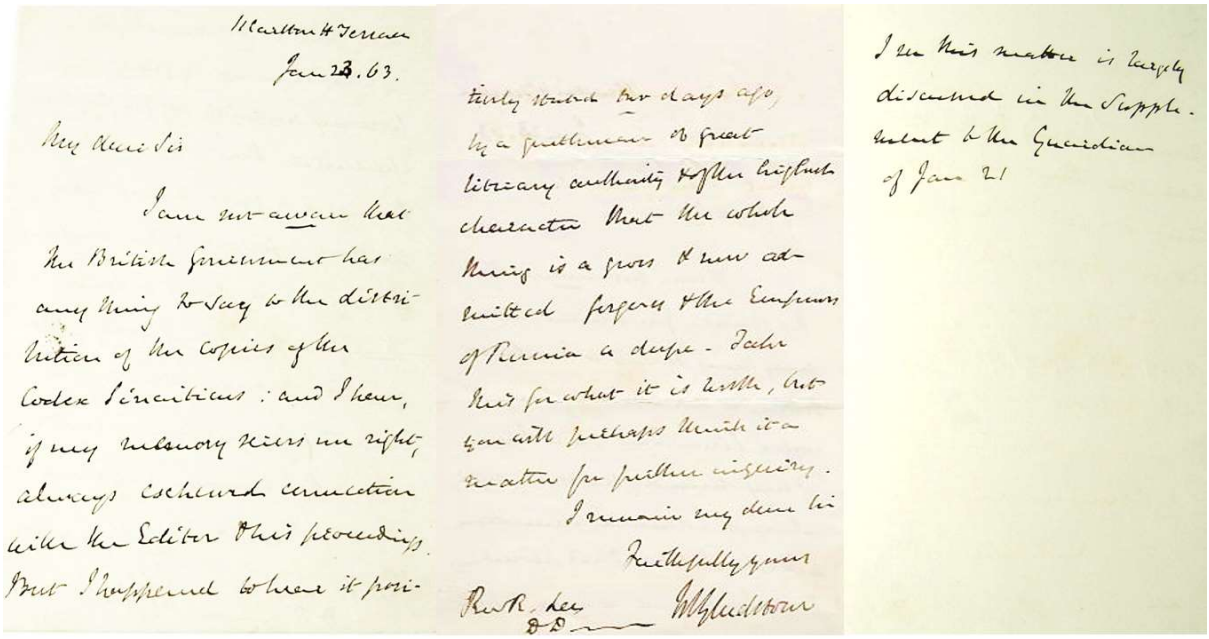
> end to all claim of value for the MS. Professor Tischendorff has been hoaxed by the 'cute monks of Sinai.[10]

By January 1863 the burden of proof was being transferred to Tischendorf. Thus *The Birmingham Journal*:

> Tischendorf and his friends will have to disprove a clear and definite statement, which, there is every reason to believe, is true, or to confess that they have been duped by the astounding abilities and unbounded boldness of a young and learned Greek. So far as we can see at present there can be little doubt that the statements of M. Simonides are correct in the main, and that he must have the dubious honour being the most clever and successful of the literary forgers of the modern world.[11]

The concept of being 'hoaxed' and 'duped' by a precocious forger was even taken up by William E. Gladstone, who held the second highest office of state in Britain, Chancellor of the Exchequer,[12] who declared:

> I am not aware that the British Government has any thing to say to the distribution of the [facsimile] copies of Codex Sinaiticus…But I happened to hear it positively stated two days ago, by a gentleman of great literary authority and of the highest character that the whole thing is a gross and now admitted forgery and the Emperor of Russia a dupe.[13]



Letter of W.E. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, January 23, 1863

[10] *St James's Chronicle*, September 6, 1862.
[11] *The Birmingham Journal*, January 17, 1863.
[12] Gladstone went on to become Prime Minister.
[13] W.E. Gladstone to the Rev. R. Lee D.D., January 23, 1863.

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The Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette summed up the state of play at the end of the January 1863:

> It seems pretty certain that the celebrated copy of the Bible found in the monastery of Mount Sinai by Tischendorf, the German, was written by Simonides.[14]

Eventually, in June 1863, William Aldis Wright of Trinity College, Cambridge wrote to the British Consul in Salonica (now Thessaloniki), the nearest city to Mount Athos, requesting that he make enquiry directly by visiting the St Panteleimon monastery, and providing a list of questions to be answered.

Richard Wilkinson, HM Consul-General in Salonica responded on October 23, 1863:[15]

> Dear Sir, I have delayed replying to your letter of the 5th of June last, as I was in hopes of visiting Mount Athos in September. My occupations here having prevented me from carrying out my intention, I have been obliged to request the Archimandrite Dionysius of the monastery of Xeropotami, a person well acquainted with the history of the Holy Mountain, to furnish me with the information you require respecting Simonides. I have now the pleasure to enclose the Archimandrite's replies to your queries, from which you will perceive that your suspicions were but too well founded. The Archimandrite Dionysius is now, and has been for many years, the spiritual head of the monks of the Monastery of Xeropotami. He is a well-informed man, and his statement may be relied upon as correct.[16] The Monastery of Xeropotami is situated close by the 'Rossico,' or St. Panteleemon.[17]

Dionysios answered all the questions,[18] indicating that Simonides' narrative was fabricated, and added a comment, which can be translated as 'There you have it, Sir! I can tell you that Simonides is a liar and an imposter, as evidenced by his acts'. Whilst Dionysios' answers were valuable, and went some way to demolishing Simonides' fables in England, Wilkinson did not explain why he failed to obtain answers directly from the St Panteleimon monastery itself as requested. No one seems to have pressed the matter, but it did give opportunity to Simonides and his supporters to cavil about details and drag the thing out all the more.

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[14] *The Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, January 29, 1863.
[15] Trinity College, Cambridge Add. MS a/40/91.
[16] Indeed, hegumen Dionysios of Xiropotamou was highly respected on Athos. He was used by the governing council of the 20 monasteries on Athos as their representative and advocate with the Ottoman authorities in Constantinople. Dionysios was thus well informed of the affairs of other monasteries and their concerns and opinions. He refers in his response to Simonides' disgraceful reappearance at Athos in 1851, where he went around the monasteries committing theft and deceit, and was thrown off the Holy Mount for his misdemeanours.
[17] Appeared in the *Guardian*, November 11, 1863.
[18] Trinity College, Cambridge Add. MS a/40/97. Wilkinson supplied a translation that forms part of this document.

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The Russian Perspective

Obtaining witness testimony

The highest echelons in church and state in Russia, who were kept fully and regularly informed about the developments of the 'Simonides Affair' in England since it started in September 1862, were wondering why, after four months, the English still had not sent a commission to interview the monks at the St Panteleimon monastery. Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, the most powerful cleric in the Russian Orthodox Church, wrote to the Tsar's representative in the Holy Synod on March 8, 1863:

> As for London's reservations about the authenticity of the Sinai manuscript, one has to question whether they are valid…Why do they not make enquiry of the Athonites, whom [Simonides] named as those who were aware of the matter?[19]

By February 1863 the Russian Antonin (Kapustin), head of the Russian Mission in Constantinople, had received instructions from the Russian authorities to visit Mount Athos for the very purpose of consulting the surviving witnesses in order to verify or disprove Simonides' statements. Antonin was fluent in Greek, having spent 13 years in Athens, and was familiar with Mount Athos, having visited all over the peninsular in 1859, where he had first met Porphyrius Uspensky.

Antonin arrived in Athos by ship on March 15, 1863. Accompanying him was the Russian diplomat Alexei Mikhailovich Kumani from the Russian Embassy in Constantinople. The delegation of Antonin and Kumani thus represented the Russian church and state respectively in their investigation of the 'Simonides Affair'.[20] They based themselves in the St Panteleimon monastery, where 20 monks

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[19] Letter of Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, to A.P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, March 8, 1863.
Indeed, the brothers at St Panteleimon were more than happy to be thoroughly investigated. Before Filaret wrote those lines 'the Athonites', the brotherhood of the St Panteleimon monastery, had read Simonides' tale and already written a comprehensive denial and rebuttal of it, inviting enquirers to 'come and see' for themselves, and interrogate whom they wished. That letter appeared in the April 1863 edition of *Orthodox Review*, which appears to have been unnoticed in England by those who had publicly involved themselves in the 'Simonides Affair'.

[20] Such an inconvenient truth does not feed Daniels' conspiracy theory, so we hear not a peep from him about it. The most profound irony is that, a few sentences before stating that not a single Russian lifted a finger to interview living witnesses, Daniels introduces 'Ignatieff's secretary A. Kumani', never informing his readers that Alexei Mikhailovich Kumani was the Russian diplomat who accompanied Antonin (Kapustin) to Mount Athos in March 1863 to interview witnesses who knew Simonides there in 1840 and were still alive to give testimony. Alexei Kumani also made enquiries in the 1860s of archimandrite Herman (or 'German') Afphonidas at St Catherine's monastery concerning the transfer of the Codex to Russia when Herman had been secretary there. Daniels conjectures this archimandrite Herman to be the Germanus in Simonides account who supposedly transferred the

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who had known Simonides in 1840 were still alive and willing to testify. Over the course of five days they also visited the monastery's *konaki* in the main town of Karyes, where St Panteleimon's representative or *antiprosopon* was in residence, a confessor who also knew Simonides in 1840 and testified; they visited the Greek monastery of Konstamonitou, where several monks from St Catherine's monastery in Sinai were in temporary residence, whom they questioned about their library and the provenance of the Codex; they visited the Bulgarian monastery of Zografou, the Serbian monastery of Hilandar, the Russian skete of St Andrew (a dependency of Vatopedi monastery), and the Greek monastery of Koutloumousiou, collecting evidence of Simonides' activities on Athos in 1840.

Antonin came away not only with the outcome of his investigations through interviews, but also with a letter to be printed in the highly influential and respected magazine *Православное Обозрение* (*'Orthodox Review'*), and, most importantly, letters addressed to the Holy Synod of All Russia in Greek and Russian signed by St Panteleimon's hegumen Gerasim giving his testimony and that of the *twenty other named monks* (with biographical details) who, like Gerasim, had known Simonides in 1840 and were still at the St Panteleimon monastery in 1863. Every living resident of the monastery who had known Simonides in 1840 without exception testified against him to the Holy Synod. In a court of law, such testimony would be compelling. Antonin's deliverables from that visit were thus of the highest probative value, and they wholly scotched the Simonidean narrative in Russia.

By April 1863, therefore, the Russian church and state rightly and justifiably concluded that Simonides' tale about his activities on Athos in 1840 was a pack of lies. Additionally, the letter from the St Panteleimon monastery fully rebutting Simonides account in the *Guardian* (September 3, 1862), which they had independently composed before knowledge of any visit from the Russian authorities, was fast-tracked for publication in the April issue of *Orthodox Review*.

But in England, instead of the curtain coming down on the 'Simonides Affair' in April 1863, as it did in Russia, it spluttered on into 1864.[21] The authorities in Russia continued to receive excellent intelligence about the 'Affair' as it played out in England and became increasingly astonished as to why the English were allowing the matter to be strung out by Simonides and themselves to be strung along by him.

Codex to St Catherine's monastery in the 1840s, but such a conjecture blatantly contradicts his statement a few lines later that no Russian lifted a finger to interview witnesses. Still, we should not expect consistency or rational argument from conspiracy theorists.

[21] And has found a new lease of life among today's conspiracy theorists, who are still being taken in by his lies.

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Russian intelligence gathering

But how were the Holy Synod and the Russian government obtaining their information about developments in London concerning the 'Simonides Affair'? This came through intelligence gathering principally by Archpriest Evgeny I. Popov, chaplain of the Russian Imperial Embassy in London. Popov was 'the Holy Synod's chief supplier of information concerning religious activities in England.'[22] Being attached to the Russian Embassy, Popov was extremely well connected with the Russian government, the nobility and the clergy.[23] The letters sent to Popov by Prince Sergei Nikolaevich Urusov, Vice-Procurator of the Holy Synod,[24] and the letters between Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Isidore, Metropolitan of St Petersburg and A. P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod reveal that the Holy Synod's official intelligence about the 'Simonides Affair' was chiefly coming from Popov via Prince Urusov every 10 days or so.

Having examined the latest regular dispatches with their enclosures from London about the 'Simonides Affair' (namely, those of November 27, and December 7 and 17, 1863), the Moscow Metropolitan wrote with exasperation at the beginning of 1864:

> The controversy about the Sinai Bible is becoming tiresome. Simonides entangles it; and some critics assist him.[25]

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[22] D.F. Abramtsov, *The Western Rite and the Eastern Church: Dr. J. J. Overbeck and His Scheme for the Re-Establishment of the Orthodox Church in the West*, (Pittsburgh, 1961). Also M. Sarni, *The Russian Church in London. From Peter the Great to the Present Day*, (2012): Popov was 'a dependable source of information on the state of religion and education in Britain for the Chief Procurators of the Holy Synod and other officials.'

[23] The Bishop of Moray and Ross in 1865 acknowledged him thus: 'Such opportunity was afforded me through the great kindness of the Rev. Eugene Popoff, Chaplain to the Imperial Russian Embassy in London. He was good enough to provide me with letters of introduction to Count Poutiatine, the late Minister of Public Instruction, and to his Excellency Count Tolstoy, the present Minister, and who also holds the important office of Ober Procureur of the Most Holy Russian Synod. To these introductions I am indebted, not only for the most unbounded kindness from many individuals, but for much valuable information on several very interesting subjects; as also for opportunities which were afforded me of some interesting with which I was honoured, by His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Constantine, the Venerable Philaret, the revered and honoured Metropolitan of Moscow, and other distinguished Prelates and laymen of the Russian Church.'

[24] Held in the British National Archives. For example RG 8/0183 from Holy Synod, 1840-1860; RG 8/0185 from Alexander Tolstoy, Chief Procurator 1857-1861; RG 8/0186 from Dimitri Tolstoy, Chief Procurator 1865-1869; RG 8/0187 from Prince S Urusov (Chancery of Holy Synod), 1859-1864; RG 8/0189 from Empress Maria Aleksandrovna's secretary, 1860-1867; RG 8/0190 from Economic Council of Holy Synod, 1866-1876; RG 8/0191 from various British Government ministries, 1852-1865; RG 8/0192 Miscellaneous papers on church matters, including Moscow Metropolitan Philaret, 1859-1867.

[25] Letter of Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, to A.P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, January 18, 1864.

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We find in these events, whereby western scholars and investigators were far behind the speed and depth of the Russian investigation, an echo of the experience of the archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky. Porphyrius Uspensky's description of Codex Sinaiticus, including colour plates of it, based on his inspections of it in 1845 and 1850, most especially of its New Testament that Tischendorf had never seen, had been lodged in European libraries, including the British Library,[26] well before Tischendorf set sail for Egypt in 1859 in hopes of finding it.[27] As Orthodox Uspensky's access to Orthodox monasteries and sources was far better than was Protestant Tischendorf's,[28] and as Uspensky was engaged in cataloguing antiquities, especially ancient manuscripts of the Bible, one might have expected that Tischendorf, commissioned by the Russians, would obtain the best and latest intelligence from the world of Russian Orthodoxy before setting off. It was not to be.

Reporting of the 'Simonides Affair' in Russia

The Russian journal *Православное Обозрение* ['*Orthodox Review*'], which started in 1860 with an ecclesiastical editorial board, and with the support of Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, as well as the Holy Synod, soon established itself as the organ of choice for correspondence, news and articles on church matters with the Western churches.[29] The Report for the year 1861 of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod of All Russia to His Majesty the Emperor of All Russia identified the *Orthodox Review* as one of the most important religious newspapers in Russia, and the Chief Procurator specifically communicated this fact to leaders of the Church of England.

In its December 1862 edition,[30] the *Orthodox Review* reproduced much of Simonides' letter that had appeared in the *Guardian* on September 3, 1862, and Tischendorf's reaction to it appearing in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 22, 1862,[31] both

[26] Then known as the British Museum.
[27] The present author has confirmed the accession date stamped in the copy in the British Library.
[28] He is termed an unbeliever in communications between Orthodox persons.
[29] It also has the honour of printing for the first time the complete Old Testament translated into Russian from the Hebrew and Aramaic (instead of the Greek LXX) by Russian scholars Archimandrite Makarios and Gerasim Petrovich Pavsky, appearing in instalments, 1860-67.
[30] The 'Old Style' Julian calendar was behind the 'New Style' Gregorian calendar, so there was time to report a German news article dated December 22, 1862 (New Style) in December (Old Style) in Russia.
[31] In the *Allgemeine Zeitung* article, Tischendorf made the very telling observation that the codex that Simonides claimed to have written (i.e. Codex Sinaiticus) could never have been commissioned by the Panteleimon monastery as a suitable gift for the Tsar because 'in the New Testament alone the Sinaitic text...contains many such readings which in a copy destined as a present to the orthodox emperor must appear gross heresies.' Uspensky had for years been making such warning comments about the Codex; for example on March 6, 1862 Uspensky in an interview with the Tsar and the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna pointed out that 'the New Testament contained in this manuscript was rewritten

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translated into Russian.[32] A few months later, in its April edition, the *Orthodox Review* would print a lengthy rebuttal letter from the St Panteleimon monastery on the 'Simonides Affair'.

Was the journal *Orthodox Review* known in England?[33] It was, and correspondence was being sent from London to be published in it, translated into Russian. At the height of the 'Simonides Affair' in 1863, the British periodical *The Colonial Church Chronicle and Missionary Journal and Foreign Ecclesiastical Reporter* made reference in its March, April, May and June 1863 issues to this Russian magazine *Orthodox Review*, for example:

> Meanwhile, we have the satisfaction of knowing that the public mind in Russia is being prepared for these advances on the part of the American Convention. Chancellor Massingbird[34] read in Convocation a letter from an influential Russian nobleman, in which he stated that an article, embodying the proceedings of Convocation, would appear in the February number of the *Orthodox Review*, published at Moscow[35] …This will be followed by other articles on the present condition of the English Church…[36]

The *Orthodox Review* was not the only influential Russian magazine to make mention of the 'Simonides Affair' at the time. In its February 1863 edition, the journal *Русскій Вѣстникъ* ['*Russian Messenger*'] carried a review of Tischendorf's *Aus dem heiligen Lande* by the towering figure of the second half of the nineteenth century, Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev,[37] who included the following statements:

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from the publication of the heretic Apollinarius, the Laodicean bishop, and...it is unseemly for the emperor, as patron, defender and guardian of Orthodoxy, unsuitably to give Christian churches prints from this Testament.' Uspensky, *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки* (St Petersburg, 1894-1902), Vol IV.

[32] *Странное объявление Симонидеса о синайском кодексе и ответ Тишендорфа*, in *Православное Обозрение*, 1862, IX, pp.162-166.

[33] The first bound volume, 1860, was duly deposited in the British Library, then known as the British Museum, but bound volumes appeared far too late to be useful as news.

[34] F.C. Massingbird, Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral and Proctor for the Clergy of that Diocese. He was Chairman of the Committee of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury on Intercommunion with the Eastern Orthodox Church.

[35]The *Orthodox Review* did indeed run the article in their February 1863 edition, taken (in Russian translation) from a report appearing in the *Colonial Church Chronicle* the previous month. *Православное Обозрение*, 1863, X, February, pp. 194-202.

[36] *The Colonial Church Chronicle and Missionary Journal and Foreign Ecclesiastical Reporter*, 1863, March p.88. As another example, in January 1864 the *Colonial Church Chronicle* wrote 'we deem it right to place before our readers the following document, which appeared originally in the *Orthodox Review*, the monthly magazine of the Russian Church, published at Moscow.'

[37] Pobedonostsev was tutor to Crown Prince Nikolai Alexandrovich, and tutor and advisor to Alexander III and Nicholas II, and become Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod and member of the State Council.

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> Meanwhile, a controversy began in the literature, initiated by the famous Greek Simonides, about the handwriting of the original manuscript: he claims that he himself forged this manuscript several years ago; but, no matter how skilled Simonides is in forgery, none of the serious representatives of science are able to believe him in this testimony: besides, everyone has long since stopped believing him.[38]

Russian connections at Cambridge: George Williams

At the height of the 'Simonides Affair' in 1863, Evgeny Popov, Russia's informant in London, together with Anglican John Mason Neale (to whom Popov sent over 50 letters), set up the Eastern Church Association to foster relations between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches. Popov served on its standing committee. The leading Anglican member of the Association (other than Neale, who never visited Russia) was the Rev. George Williams. Williams, a senior fellow of King's College Cambridge, had served as a chaplain in St Petersburg in 1844-5, and visited Russia again as recently as 1860. In July 1860 Williams was in correspondence about Codex Sinaiticus and the editions that Tischendorf was compiling.[39] In his 1860 trip to Russia, Williams had sought to bring Russian students to a 'Russian Hotel' at King's College Cambridge, and he prevailed inasmuch as by the Imperial Decree of November 26, 1860, a student of the Moscow Theological Academy was sent to England for two years ostensibly 'for academic purposes'. A second divinity student was sent when the first had completed his studies. These students would certainly have been required to keep in regular contact with Archpriest Popov in London, and the *Orthodox Review* would have been essential reading.

George Williams kept himself fully abreast of developments in Russia, for in November 1861 we find Williams writing to the London *Times* newspaper defending recent actions taken by the Russian government in respect of the wearing of military uniforms by their students at university. Williams was also a contributor to the *Guardian* and *The Christian Remembrancer*, both of which ran articles about the 'Simonides Affair', which started in September 1862, and he met Simonides in

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[38] *Новыя путешествія по Востоку…Тишендорфъ и синайская библія*. In *Русскій Вѣстникъ* 1863 том 43 №2, февраль 1863, p.535. This journal was extremely influential in literary circles. Almost all the Russian Classics of the second half of the nineteenth century were first published in it.

[39] For example with Sir George Grove. Undergraduate reminiscences from 1863 include that Tischendorf was invited by Williams to address them at King's College in 1864: 'At [George Williams'] rooms we met from time to time for prayer and the study of theology, and--so far as our awe of him allowed--for discussion. From time to time also he invited us to meet and hear various distinguished persons who had been to us but famous names only. On one occasion Tischendorff [sic] charmed us with the story of his discovery of the *Codex Sinaiticus*.' G. Ward *The Life of Charles Alan Smythies* (London, 1899).

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Cambridge the following month at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.[40] During the 'Simonides Affair' Popov (who was regularly feeding intelligence on the 'Affair' from London to Russia) was working closely with Williams. Williams himself was in communication with the Russians directly and through well-connected intermediaries. In a letter to the *Church Journal* dated January 20, 1863, at the height of the 'Simonides Affair', Williams described a Russian Count who 'has close relations with many learned and influential members of his own Church, ecclesiastics and others' as 'my very intimate friend'. In June of 1863 Williams was back in Russia again, talking face to face with the key players involved in the Russian investigations into the 'Simonides Affair'.

George Williams was remarkably well connected with Russians involved in matters to do with Codex Sinaiticus. There was ongoing correspondence between Williams and Abraham Sergeevich Norov, a member of the Russian State Council, who had enjoyed a string of government positions, including Minister of Public Education. In that capacity Norov had met Tischendorf in Saxony in 1858 and brokered the deal whereby Tischendorf would obtain the Codex in exchange for personal advantage conferred by Russia.[41] Norov visited St Catherine's monastery in Sinai in January 1862 and began some negotiations about ownership of the Codex Sinaiticus.[42] Norov and George Williams kept up a friendship and correspondence from as far back as 1845 (the year that Uspensky discovered the Sinaitic New Testament 'entire', with

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[40] This meeting, the thirty-second, was impressively large and took place from October 1-7 in Cambridge. Simonides stayed in Cambridge with his interpreter friend Leonidas Drachachis, and during the course of the week publicly displayed his forgeries. Rev. George Williams was Vice-President of the Sectional Committee on Geography and Ethnology and read the paper *Rev. Dr. Mill's Decipherment of the Phoenician Inscription on the Newton Stone, Aberdeenshire* upon which Simonides commented, claiming to be able to interpret the inscription and attempting to do so. This was just one month after his explosive 'revelation' in the *Guardian*, which would have been noticed by many of the delegates at the meetings. On October 7 he was led into Cambridge library and the facsimile of the portion of Codex Sinaiticus that Tischendorf had removed from Sinai in 1844 (43 leaves) was set before him, which he claimed to be a facsimile of his work.

[41] A.S. Norov, *Иерусалим и Синай: записки второго путешествия на Восток* (St Petersburg, 1878): 'At this time, in 1856, I was going to Germany, to mineral waters, for the use of my wife, and we agreed to meet with [Tischendorf] in Halle. Here he developed for me all his thoughts and hopes on this subject; I could not help but take the warmest participation in this project and, knowing the attention that our Sovereign pays to everything that relates to the benefits of science and especially to subjects relating to our Orthodox Church, I immediately upon my return to St Petersburg reported to His Majesty about the proposal of Professor Tischendorf; my petition was graciously accepted, and the Empress showed special participation in the success of this matter, even offering her own money. Tischendorf's trip was decided, and the Codex Sinaiticus was acquired by Russia.'

[42] Norov departed from Russia in October 1861 and returned at the end of February 1862. Norov was the first to weigh in to 'defend' the Codex against Porphyrius Uspensky's published opinion in 1862 that it had a heretical provenance.

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Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas) until Norov's death in 1869.[43] We also know from later diary references (though not many surviving letters) that there was an ongoing and somewhat covert correspondence between Williams and Antonin (Kapustin).

Why, then, since Williams must have been cognizant of what the Russians were doing about the 'Simonides Affair', did he not disseminate this information in Cambridge? Why did William Aldis Wright not get to hear about this, instead of ending up asking the Consulate in Salonica in June 1863 much the same questions as had already been answered even more fully, and disseminated in an unrestricted publication two months earlier? Since the Russians were well ahead of western scholars in the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus, and had even put its whereabouts under the noses of their western colleagues in the 1850s, why would Wright not think to check the news coming out of Russia concerning Simonides' claims before troubling the British Consulate? Would it not seem obvious first to look at what was disclosed in the Russian literature, and make contact with local known Russophiles in Cambridge such as George Williams who were bound to be clued in?

The trivial answer that W. Aldis Wright was at Trinity college whereas George Williams was at King's, with the conjecture that there was little communication between colleges, does not stand up in light of the evidence of extant letters. Moreover, Trinity College's W. Aldis Wright and King's College's dean, Henry Bradshaw, were working together to denounce the 'Simonides Affair'. The two of them had taken Simonides into Cambridge University library on October 7, 1862 and questioned him, and both had written to the *Guardian* about the 'Simonides Affair' in January 1863. But most importantly, Henry Bradshaw was a close friend of George Williams.[44] Bradshaw and Williams were not merely in the same college, and sitting at the same high table: they were very intimate friends and they two were also friends with B.F. Westcott and F.J.A Hort,[45] who all had a mutual interest in Codex

[43] V. Khitrovo: 'Mr. [George] Williams travelled to Russia in 1845 in order to gain new information about the issue that interests him in our libraries, in conversation with our hierarchs. Detained by ice in Kronstadt, he received his first greetings on Russian soil from Abraham Sergeevich [Norov], and the correspondence that began then continued for over 20 years. Tischendorf needed to visit the East for his research, and here again there was a whole correspondence, the result of which was the acquisition by Russia of the famous Codex Sinaiticus.' Front matter in A.S. Norov, Иерусалим и Синай: записки второго путешествия на Восток (St Petersburg, 1878)

[44] When Bradshaw arrived at King's College, 'Mr George Williams, a Fellow of King's College… rapidly acquired much influence with him.' G W Prothero *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw* (London, 1888), p.28.

[45] Bradshaw 'discussed literature and theology, and made many friends, among them E. W. Benson, F. J. A. Hort, H. M. Butler, H. R. Luard, B. F. Westcott, and George Williams.' *Dictionary Of National Biography*, 1901 Supplement, Vol.1. F.J.A Hort had denounced Simonides at the start of the 'Affair'.

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Sinaiticus. Bradshaw was Keeper of Manuscripts at the University Library, and was one of only two English scholars who by 1862 had actually examined the Codex Sinaiticus,[46] and had been persuaded to weigh into the controversy in the *Guardian* in January 1863.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that Williams was aware of the latest developments in the 'Simonides Affair' from the Russian perspective, and that from multiple sources within Russia. The question to be answered, therefore, is not whether anyone at the top table at King's College, Cambridge, was aware of the Russian perspective on the 'Affair', since Williams must have been. The question is why Williams himself did not deliver the *coup de grace* on the whole affair in England in April 1863; and why Williams in the spring of 1863 did not pass on his intelligence to his dear friend Bradshaw in his college. It is unthinkable that Bradshaw would not have asked Williams about developments in Russia, knowing, as he did, Williams' trips to that country, his close connections there, his intelligence on Russian domestic matters (evidenced by his letters to the *Times*), and his fascination with Codex Sinaiticus. It is certain, moreover, that Bradshaw knew of Williams' planned itinerary to Russia (via France and Germany) in the summer of 1863, since Bradshaw wrote to him on his travels.[47] It would have been the easiest thing in the world for Williams to have supplied Bradshaw with an accurate translation into English[48] from the *Orthodox Review*. And could not Henry Bradshaw, in turn, have encouraged those who had urged him to enter the fray in January 1863 to take a look at the evidence that had emerged from Russia? As we noted above, Williams was both a reader and a contributor to the *Guardian* (which covered the 'Simonides Affair') and he wrote to that paper and had letters published in it during 1863. Yet in relation to the 'Simonides Affair' there was a deafening silence from Williams.

The combination with other evidences leads us to the same opinion, that the Russian government considered it *against* their interests to quash the 'Simonides Affair' *in England*, and would have conveyed as much to Williams. All Williams was expected to do was to keep quiet. Williams would not wish to upset the Russians since he was going to meet them face to face in June and wished for a favourable reception.

Likewise, it was the desire of Gerasim, the hegumen of the St Panteleimon monastery, that their witness testimony to the Holy Synod would be 'published in

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[46] When it was at Tischendorf's house in Leipzig in July 1862. The other scholar was S.P. Tregelles.
[47] 'In May, 1863, Mr George Williams happened to be visiting Paris, and Bradshaw asked him to look at the book and see if it answered to the description of the lost volume…Mr Williams wrote back, "I was at the Imperial Library yesterday…" ', Prothero *op. cit.* p.101.
[48] Williams may have been able to do a passable translation himself, but he could have obtained an indisputably accurate translation from his friend Norov who was thoroughly fluent in English, or the Russian divinity student at King's whom Williams had introduced, or from Popov in London.

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some European newspaper in the [Greek] original, in order to expose Simonides' lies',[49] and that desire was conveyed all the way to the Chief Procurator. Although the monastery and the Russian Orthodox Church considered this path desirable, the Russian state had other ideas.[50]

It is to Antonin's March 1863 visit and his deliverables therefrom that we now turn.

Antonin (Kapustin)

Andrey Ivanovich Kapustin (1817-94) first taught at the Kiev Theological Academy. On becoming a monk he took the name Antonin. He was appointed rector of the church at the Russian embassy in Athens in 1850. This was towards the end of Simonides' time in Athens, where he had become notorious as a forger, trying to pass off forged documents as ancient, and also for his political activities including the persecution of the American missionary Jonas King, which sparked a diplomatic incident, with American gunboats being sent to Greece. Antonin kept abreast of Simonides' later tales from reports in Greek newspapers, for example he records in his diary on February 18, 1856:

[49] Letter of Antonin (Kapustin) to Metropolitan Isidore of Novgorod and St Petersburg dated March 26, 1863.

[50] The reasons why the Russian government were desirous that Simonides played the long game in the affair *only in England* and, we believe, actively assisted him in this, will be set out in a subsequent monograph entitled *Codex Sinaiticus and the Three Constantines*.

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> Curious news is reported by ἡ "Ἀθηνᾶ" about Simonides' shenanigans in Berlin.

Elsewhere he noted

> In the Greek magazine ἡ Πανδώρα in 1850-51 there are interesting articles about Simonides' publications.[51]

Antonin first travelled to Mount Athos in 1859, and spent time in the St Panteleimon library,[52] and there struck up a lifelong friendship with hierodeacon Azarius, who became the monastery librarian the following year. Azarius was Antonin's key correspondent and informant on Athos: he conducted intelligence, ran errands and procured manuscripts and icons at Karyes and elsewhere (or photographs thereof) to send to Antonin. They collaborated on an important venture, publishing the acts of the monastery of St Panteleimon.

Antonin also visited the Vatopedi monastery's library in 1859, and there he first met the archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky, with whom he would go on to have a great deal of correspondence. Antonin noted the 'shameless and immoral' act that 'a predatory hand' had committed in tearing out and stealing leaves from precious manuscripts, including from the monastery's most prized possession:

> The treasure of the library is a copy of Ptolemaic *Geography* with maps, which became known to the world in the excellent photographs of Mr. Sevastyanov. The book, however, is missing several quires,[53] torn out by a predatory hand for the sake of these same maps, the number of which is also not complete. This theft was committed not long ago; because just a few years ago the book was seen in its entirety by one of our researchers.[54]

This shameless and immoral act of vandalism and theft was committed by none other than Constantine Simonides in his second (and mercifully short) stay on Mount Athos in 1851-2. Disbarred from the library of St Panteleimon, Simonides

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[51] *Заметки поклонника Св. Горы,* see footnote below. The *Pandora* magazine exposed Simonides as a fraudster.

[52] 'In Russik's library I saw the 14th or 15th century. Among the manuscripts there are textbooks on Logic, Metaphysics, Geography, Astronomy, two or three Rhetorics, etc.' *Op cit.*

[53] Usually 4 bifolia folded to produce 8 leaves, 16 pages. The Russian word тетрадь (*tetrad*) here originally connoted a unit of 4 bifolia, a standard quire (as indeed used on Codex Sinaiticus), but by extension it can be used of any stitched gathering in bookbinding. The term is also used of an individual blank booklet ('exercise book', 'notebook', 'copybook' etc). Quires can often be easily detached by cutting the stitching holding each quire into the binding, or even breaking these threads by tearing a complete quire out of a binding, keeping the pages intact and still stitched together as a quire. Removing the top and bottom quires are the easiest of all, the technique that Tischendorf used to make his 1844 'collection' from a contiguous block of quires of an LXX portion of Codex Sinaiticus.

[54] Antonin (Kapustin). *Заметки поклонника Св. горы* published in instalments in *Труды Киевской духовной академии* (Kiev, 1860-63). In book form *Заметки поклонника Святой горы* (Kiev, 1864).

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went around other monasteries purloining their manuscripts, or parts thereof, until he was detected and thrown off the Holy Mountain for good. Perhaps the most famous map in Vatopedi's library is Ptolemy's *Geography* is the map of the British Isles (see below), which Simonides stole in 1851. He sold it, and twenty other stolen leaves, to Frederic Madden, Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, in 1853.

Antonin was aware of the partly forged work of Simonides, the Simaida, a fabulous history of the island of Syme, particularly of a fictitious school of art there. At some point Simonides had access to a genuinely old work but had confabulated and added knowledge of inventions such as colour photography. Its reception in Greece was startling, according to Antonin in the notes of his visit to Athos in 1859:

> In 1848, he surprised the world by publishing his book the Simaida in Athens… The highly important subject of Simaida, presented with a fullness and clarity that exceeded all expectations, puzzled the entire Greek learned world. It was as if the sun had suddenly shone in the middle of the night. Naturally, everyone doubted the historical authenticity of the Simaida, considered its publisher a fraudster, denounced to the scientific court the "thousands" of ancient manuscripts announced by him, and drove their owner [Simonides] to the necessity to flee from Greece. After unsuccessful attempts to obtain a better reception in Constantinople, he went to Europe, and, after many adventures, was imprisoned…
>
> Many people saw the original Simaida and found it really ancient. Only the last pages (where it talks about photography) seem to have been recently written.[55] In

[55] Elsewhere Antonin states that there are '12 sheets of new handwriting woven into it'.

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> print Simonides assured that he had found the original in a library, but verbally he once said that he had discovered it in the ruins of a painting school on the island of Syme, and another time that he found it in the hands of a priest.

Antonin in his 1859 notes mentions Simonides having been at St Panteleimon: he recounts that he was 'known throughout the Holy Mountain', people remembered him, and that he lived there for some time 'while he was a boy'[56] under the supervision of 'an ancient holy man' Benedict 'famous for his learning and who was a very important person in Russik around 20 to 25 years ago', and that it was from Benedict that this lad 'received his first education.'[57]

Over a 20-year period Simonides flooded the world with manuscripts, many forged by him, but others genuine and stolen by him. Certainly by the mid-1850s he was notorious, and universities and libraries were put on notice about his tactics. In 1861 we find Antonin studying old manuscripts so that he will be able to detect the forgeries of Simonides: the best training to detect forgery is to become thoroughly familiar with the genuine:

> I began to get used to the ancient handwriting and soon I will not yield to the imitations of Kostaki Simonides himself.[58]

Simonides was expelled from Mount Athos in January 1852, having made himself *persona non grata* for acts of theft and vandalism. Once the extent of his 'collections' on the Holy Mountain became known there was widespread outrage.

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[56] Мальчиком, young boy. The word is used for a male child from before birth to puberty. Simonides was just turning 15 when he arrived in Athos. That Simonides was still 'a boy' in 1839 clearly infers that he had not completed puberty. The rules of Mount Athos at that time prohibited males without beards and males under the age of 20 (later relaxed to 18) from staying on Mount Athos, except when accompanied by their father. The reason for Simonides being sent to Mount Athos are unclear (it was possibly banishment: he was too young to suffer the extreme penalty of the law), but it was a convenient fiction that Benedict, who was known to be from the same island of Syme, could be passed off as an uncle caring for an orphaned nephew in case questions were asked why this youngster was sojourning on Athos under age. Once Benedict died, the fiction died with him and Simonides had to be moved on.

[57] All this aligns in respect of age with what the monks later set out in the letter to the *Orthodox Review* in 1863 at the height of the 'Simonides Affair', and also with Charles Stewart's 1859 *Memoir* about Simonides, and confirm that Simonides was born in Hydra in 1824 as he himself maintained until it became a weakness in his story. In the 1860s Simonides forged documents to set back his birth to 1820 in Syme so that he appeared older and more experienced to be able to write a codex of the entire Bible, and he dissembled that he first visited Athos in 1837 and was quite skilled by 1839 and up to such a task.

[58] 'Kostaki' is Russian short name for Kontantinos, like Greek 'Kosta'.

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Antonin tells us that Simonides acted on intelligence that was useful to him, and gives an example of his 'way in' to the library of the monastery of St Paul in 1851 from his overhearing a conversation in another monastery.

> [Simonides] lived on Mount Athos for a long time, and more than once,[59] and it is known for certain that he spent quite a bit of time in the monastery of St Paul…[B]efore I visited the monastery…I heard a story on Mount Athos about how Simonides, listening in one monastery (not St Paul, although not very far from it) to the complaints of the hegumen about the lack of information about the original state of the monastery, asked permission to examine all the old books and documents of the monastery and, after three days, triumphantly announced that the monastery possessed, unknown to itself, the clearest document of its historical existence many centuries before.[60]

He did of course 'find' such a document by creating it, and in the process of rummaging with unfettered access he ransacked the library and stole what he wished. This trick of discerning what people wanted and serendipitously producing it 'on demand' was one that he repeated all over Europe, in Turkey, France, the German states, and England. It assisted him in every way in his enterprise as a confidence trickster. It took a while for the deception to sink in, but by then he was off to new places to play the same shenanigans.

The renowned Bulgarian researcher Konstantin Dmitrov Petkovich,[61] the first Bulgarian to obtain access the libraries on Mount Athos to catalogue Slavic manuscripts, describes the situation he found on Athos in October 1852, nine months after Simonides was expelled:

> In almost all the monasteries I saw manuscripts spoiled by these barbarians, who, without any scruple of conscience, abused the trust with which simple-minded and ignorant monks honoured them by revealing to them the treasures of the monastery. They tore out sheets of parchment from ancient manuscripts, cut with scissors those places where the year in which the manuscript was written and the name of the scribe were indicated - also the illustrations that were in the manuscript; sometimes they took and carried off entire manuscripts. They especially lament and cry out against the Greek Simonides, that same deceiver and ignoramus who recently alarmed all the scholars by declaring that he possessed the greatest written treasures from the most distant antiquity: he damaged many precious manuscripts, tore up

[59] 27 months in total: 1839-41 (23 months) and 1851-52 (4 months).

[60] Antonin (Kapustin), op. cit.

[61] Konstantin Dmitrov Petkovich (1824-98) was born in Bašino Selo in what is now known as North Macedonia. He studied at the Richelieu Lyceum in Odessa, shortly after Simonides was expelled from that academy. He was awarded a scholarship to the University of St Petersburg. Following his studies on Mount Athos he naturalized as a Russian citizen (Konstantin Dmitriev-Petkovich) and distinguished himself in the Russian diplomatic service.

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> parchment sheets, washed out what was written and wrote again himself from the Greek classics or invented chapters and paragraphs of lost historians.[62]

He also describes the impediments that he encountered, such as at the monastery of St Dionysios:

> Having arrived at the monastery at 8 o'clock in the evening, I immediately introduced myself to Hegumen Eulogios and handed him a letter of recommendation … but when I told him that I hoped that His Reverence would allow me to look at the monastery library, his kindness turned into rudeness and insolence. He announced to me assertively and in a loud voice that this was simply impossible, that I would not see the library…At last the hegumen, having calmed down a little, openly declared to me the reason why he was afraid to open the library to foreigners. At the same time he hinted at the actions of the Greek Simonides, who was not afraid to use our religion itself as a means for his deceptions and thefts.[63]

We see the similarity with what was reported by Amphilocius, bishop of Pelusium, who first met Simonides at the Richelieu Lyceum in Odessa in 1841, and who was a hierodeacon at St Panteleimon when Simonides arrived the second time on Athos in 1851:

> As, however, our Hegoumenos[64] would not allow him access to the library of our monastery, he went away to other monasteries, but as in some of the said monasteries he mutilated many manuscript books, wickedly tearing out of them entire sheets, the entrance to many libraries of the said monasteries was forbidden him, and thus he departed from the holy mountain in disgrace.[65]

[62] K.P. Dmitriev-Petkovich, *Обзор афонских древностей*; *Прилож. №4* in *Записки имп. Академии наук*, (St Petersburg, 1865).
[63] Ibid.
[64] Hegumen Gerasim.
[65] Letter of Amphilocius, Bishop of Pelusium dated October 4, 1863, to Edwin John Davis. Printed in the *Guardian*, December 2, 1863.

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The Russian authorities take action

Once the 'Simonides Affair' broke openly in England in September 1862, when Simonides publicly claimed to have written Codex Sinaiticus himself,[66] it did not take long for the Russians to swing into action. The Russian Orthodox Church had two matters to deal with at the same time concerning the Codex: firstly, the scholar Porphyrius Uspensky had written a treatise warning of the heretical provenance of the text; and then Simonides had claimed that he was the author of the work in 1840.

Archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky kept up correspondence with Antonin about antiquities since they had met on Mount Athos in 1859, and they exchanged information on a variety of subjects.[67] Uspenski wrote to Antonin from St Petersburg on December 8, 1862 about the latest developments regarding Codex Sinaiticus, enclosing his opinion on it that he had published as a pamphlet: 'Please accept as a brotherly gift for the New Year my opinion on the Sinai manuscript Bible, recently printed by Tischendorf.' This opinion was that it had heretical provenance, which greatly annoyed the Russian Orthodox hierarchy, and Uspensky rapidly fell out of favour for making his opinions known without first obtaining top-level clearance. Antonin in his diary of February 3, 1863 records with pleasure the arrival of the package sent from Uspensky containing manuscript photographs:

> I was busy reading. In the evening, while sitting blissfully in front of the stove, I received a huge letter with brochures and photographs from the wonderful Father Porphyrius, who is in St Petersburg.

Among other things, Uspensky had written in this letter of December 8, 1862:

> In the first days of last November, the notorious publisher of the Sinai manuscript Bible, Tischendorf, was here and met me, at the request of V. K. Elena Pavlovna. He himself told me that he was not received here very kindly and was awarded only the star of Stanislav (it seems the German was hoping for money), and that the Empress (who had read my two opinions about that manuscript) objected to him: "In the Sinai Gospel it is said: 'No one has seen God at any time, the Only-begotten God in the bosom of the Father has declared Him.' What is the meaning of the words: 'the Only-

[66] This was the first *public* announcement by Simonides, though Simonides had been telling the story privately to his friends and some scholars as far back as 1860. Tregelles and F.J.A. Hort were aware of it prior to the public disclosure, and scholars Tregelles and Bradshaw travelled to Leipzig in the summer of 1862 to view Codex Sinaiticus for themselves and assess its age. Hort (friend of Bradshaw and correspondent with Tregelles) wrote to the *Guardian* newspaper in July 1862 that the claims of Simonides were baseless, but few readers would have understood the background to that comment until Simonides recounted his story publicy in the September 3 edition of the *Guardian*.

[67] Porphyrius Uspensky had discovered the Minor Prophets and New Testament (plus Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas) portion of Codex Sinaiticus in 1845 and published about them, with colour plates, before Tischendorf had seen them. Uspensky had spent time at Mount Athos, and even met Antonin there in 1859, and was familiar with the shenanigans of Simonides.

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> begotten God?' Tischendorf answered her: "Nowhere in the Holy Scripture is God called the Only-begotten. This title befits the Son of God. Therefore, the reading of the Sinai Gospel is not correct." Thus began and ended the hermeneutical audience. Imagine what the Empress thought and thinks about Tischendorf's new magnificent edition, and about this Saxon himself, who was aware of the greatest disparity between the Sinai Gospel and the Gospel received by all churches and kept silent about it before the Emperor, just to publish an ancient manuscript in protest against the universally received Gospel. This *magus* has returned to his Leipzig with a star, but it will soon fade. My published opinion about the Sinai Bible, I hope, will instruct and enlighten many. Its examination has been entrusted to Archpriest Bazhanov for consideration; he does not approve of it.

Towards the end of 1862, Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, received reports from Archpriest E. I. Popov in London via Prince Urusov, Vice-Procurator of the Holy Synod, and was deeply troubled about developments regarding the interventions both of Uspensky and Simonides. At the turn of the year Filaret wrote to the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod regarding the 'Simonides Affair':

> We should not ignore the fact that Simonides denies the antiquity of the Sinai manuscript, but asserts that he wrote it himself on Athos in 1839. According to this testimony, the manuscript is a forgery and does not have a drop of dignity. True, Simonides became famous for paleographic forgeries, and was imprisoned for them, and he therefore does not deserve to be trusted, which does not instil confidence about this sort of manuscript; but Simonides points out witnesses, among whom he names hieromonk Prokopios of the Panteleimon monastery, Russian monk Pavel, monastery calligrapher Dionysios. And the Alexandrian hieromonk Kallinikos puts himself forward in favour of Simonides and has written a letter about this to the publisher of *The Literary Churchman*. Tischendorf refutes Simonides; however, a decisive judgment on the subject of the dispute can only be pronounced after examining the case.[68]

The Church would deal academically with the textual matter raised by Uspensky, but it needed someone who was highly skilled in Greek and Russian, and preferably who had contacts at the St Panteleimon monastery, to check out the Simonidean story. Antonin fitted the bill admirably, and they sent him in to investigate whether there was any truth to Simonides' account of his activities in 1840. No one doubted that since the mid-1840s Simonides had shown himself to be a scoundrel, a thief, a liar and an imposter, but in late 1839 he would only have just turned 15 and not perhaps been so hardened a criminal. His story at least needed checking out.

Metropolitan Filaret proposed to the Chief Procurator that *inter alia* the following instructions be given to Antonin (Kapustin) in Constantinople:

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[68] Letter of Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, to A.P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, January 4, 1863

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> 4) Instruct Archimandrite Antonin to approach Panteleimon's Hieromonk Prokopios on Athos and ask for information: did the late hegumen Benedict really want to bring a worthy gift to Emperor Nicholas I of blessed memory? Did Prokopios really advise for this purpose that the Old and New Testaments should be written on parchment, in the likeness of the old styles, and this was proposed to the calligrapher Dionysios, but due to his refusal, Simonides took this upon himself, who for this purpose took a parchment from the library, a thick, almost unwritten book, and wrote the Bible in it from the Moscow edition, and from several old manuscripts?
>
> 5) That Archimandrite Antonin be asked to contact the Russian monk Pavel at the Panteleimon Monastery: did he, together with Hieromonk Prokopios, really give the late hegumen Benedict the advice mentioned in the previous paragraph, and was the matter really carried out this way, as stated in the previous point?
>
> 6) He should go to the same monastery in respect of the calligrapher Dionysios: was it really suggested to him by the late hegumen Benedict to write the Old and New Testaments in ancient handwriting for Emperor Nicholas I, but he refused this? And was it really the case that the Bible was written under the circumstances indicated in paragraph 4 above?
>
> 7) To demand that Archimandrite Antonin present to the Metropolitan of Novgorod the answers that will be received from the above-mentioned persons, for submission to the Holy Synod.
>
> 8) Having received opinions about the Sinai manuscript from spiritual academies and from the East, and information from Athos, that depending on their content the Holy Synod deliberate whether to publish them for further discussion, and in anticipation of the judgments of Western scholars, or appoint a commission to reach a decisive conclusion about the Sinai manuscript.[69]

Accordingly, the presiding member of the Holy Synod, Isidore, Metropolitan of Novgorod and St Petersburg,[70] sent orders to Antonin (Kapustin) on January 29, 1863 for him to make the necessary investigations. It took four weeks for the letter to travel from St Petersburg to Constantinople, and in the meantime Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow saw further details sent by Popov in London and wrote again to the Chief Procurator thus:

> I have now received and forced myself to read (as my eyes demanded) the reports from London about the Sinai manuscript of the Bible. And the appearance of the book does not favour Simonides or his proofs. If they wanted to produce a manuscript worthy of presentation to the Emperor, why was it necessary to disfigure

[69] Ibid.

[70] Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, which before Peter the Great's reform had been the seat of the patriarch, had declined to attend meetings of the Holy Synod since he had been humiliated by the Chief Procurator in 1842.

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> it with such a multitude of errors and corrections? Simonides, who presented himself as an expert in the field, could have obviated this, and for his honour should have done so. An ancient manuscript, even if it is defective, can be of great significance; a new manuscript, disfigured by a multitude of errors, is unworthy not only of the sovereign's library, but of anyone else's. Simonides says that he has proofs, yet leaves them in his bosom for the time being. It is more typical for a deceiver to speak like this than a truth-loving man when he is asked to clear any doubts.
>
> The hieromonk who, without any summons, publicly rushed in with a puffed-up letter in support of Simonides,[71] does not inspire confidence. We can expect some confrontation between Simonides and Tischendorf, yet without serious apprehension. Of greater significance for us is the question raised by Archimandrite Porphyry's denunciation of the Sinai manuscript, if it is indeed ancient. Yesterday I wrote to your Excellency that the investigation of this question in the Academy is nearing completion, and the denunciation is not confirmed.[72]

Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, and Isidore, Metropolitan of Novgorod and St Petersburg, continued to receive intelligence about the 'Simonides Affair' playing out in England. During February 1863 Filaret also received the initial report of the analysis of the claims of Porphyrius Uspensky, and he sent another letter to the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, on March 8, 1863:

> I am returning Muralt's letter about the Sinai manuscript of the Bible. I have delayed because I had to give it to the rector of the academy to read. You see, from the first indications, the much-deserved conclusion that the manuscript is not downright heretical is confirmed by a scholar who has thoroughly examined the edition and the original.
>
> As for London's reservations about the authenticity of the Sinai manuscript, one has to doubt whether they are valid; when Simonides announced at the meeting that he would write a leaf of the Sinai manuscript, this meant no more than that the well-known forger of manuscripts would forge another leaf. What would come of this? But then, if they had gone this way, why did they back down? Let him write a leaf. A forger can be recognized in the presence of the original manuscript, especially one of such a special nature. I repeat what I have already said: why did Simonides disfigure the manuscript with a multitude of mistakes and corrections, even erroneous ones? Why do they not question the Athonites, whom he named as those who were cognizant of the matter?[73]

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[71] Kallinikos, an *alter ego* of Simonides.

[72] Letter of Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, to A.P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, February 10, 1863.

[73] Letter of Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, to A.P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, March 8, 1863.

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Antonin's (Kapustin) instructions and his preparations

Antonin's instructions from the Holy Synod via Metropolitan Isidore were as follows:

> Most Reverend Father Archimandrite. Last year, Leipzig University professor Tischendorf completed the publication of the Sinai manuscript of the Bible at the expense of the Russian government. This publication was published by Tischendorf through the Ministry of Public Education. Now, regarding the comments made by the former head of the Jerusalem Mission, Archimandrite Porphyrius, about the shortcomings of the Codex Sinaiticus in dogmatic terms, this codex, by the Highest command, was transferred for dogmatic evaluation to the Holy Synod, which made the necessary orders on this. Meanwhile, the following news report came to the attention of the Holy Synod about the origin of the Sinai manuscript of the Bible.[74] The late hegumen of the Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos, Benedict, wanted to bring a worthy gift to Emperor Nicholas I of blessed memory. For this purpose, Hieromonk Prokopios and the Russian monk Pavel advised the Panteleimon Monastery to write the Old and New Testaments in the likeness of old models, on parchment, and this was suggested to the calligrapher Dionysios. Due to Dionysios' refusal, this work was taken over by the Greek palaeographer Simonides, who for this purpose took a thick parchment book, almost unwritten, from the library, and wrote in it the Bible from the Moscow edition and several old manuscripts. Simonides' writing of the Codex Sinaiticus was announced in one of the English magazines (*Literary Churchman*) by himself and the Alexandrian hieromonk Kallinikos, who witnessed this work. According to these statements, the Sinai manuscript of the Bible is forged and loses the dignity that Tischendorf ascribes to it; in order to clear this doubt, it seems necessary to ask Panteleimon's hieromonk Prokopios and monk Pavel whether they offered the above-mentioned advice to the late hegumen Benedict, and whether the matter was really carried out as stated above; and from the calligrapher Dionysios to find out whether it was proposed to him to write the Old and New Testaments for the stated purpose, but he refused this, and whether the Bible was actually written after this under the circumstances mentioned. It was deemed convenient to entrust the collection of this information to Your Reverence. In informing you about this, I consider it necessary to add that for greater success in this matter it would be very useful if you yourself could go to Athos and personally talk with each of the aforementioned persons separately. If such a trip turns out not to be possible, then in the course of your written communications on this matter with Fathers Prokopios, Pavel and Dionysios, it will be necessary to take every precaution that this correspondence does not receive publicity and does not have any official character in the eyes of the said persons.[75]

---

[74] Hereafter, Isidore merely describes the 'news report [that] came to the attention of the Holy Synod', not affirming that there is an ounce of truth in it.

[75] Letter of Isidore, Metropolitan of Novgorod and St Petersburg, to Antonin (Kapustin), January 29, 1863.

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These orders were in Antonin's hand by February 26, as he records in his diary:

> [February 26] The steamer came at night. First of all it brought me an order from the Holy Synod to inquire on the Holy Mountain about whether there is in any truth in Simonides' statement about the forgery of the Codex Sinaiticus, and for that purpose, if I find it possible, even to go there to that end…Wrote a letter to Archimandrite Porphyrius.[76]

The next day he went to communicate to Evgeny Petrovitch Novikov, the Secretary of the Russian Embassy, that he had been instructed by the Holy Synod to go to Mount Athos on a fact-finding mission.

> [February 27] I was busy with my endless 'Bithynia'.[77] In the evening I went with the synodal letter to Evgeny Petrovich.[78]

As we later find, Novikov appointed his undersecretary Alexei Michailovich Kumani to accompany Antonin, so this became a two-man commission representing church and state.

A day later Antonin wrote to his friend Fr Gennadius in Patisia,[79] near Athens, for the latest intelligence from there.

> [February 28] Wrote a letter to the Patisian pastor, inquiring from him about Simonides and his adventures on the Holy Mountain.

He also wrote to his trusted correspondent Fr Azarius, the librarian at the St Panteleimon monastery,[80] as follows:

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[76] Uspensky did not receive this letter until March 24. The letter was continuation of correspondence about the dating of iconography on Athos, which involved Simonides who had tampered with inscriptions.

[77] Articles he was writing for publication in *Христианское чтение*, 'Christian Reading'. 1863. Part 1. March. pp. 422-460; Part 2. May. pp. 67-124; Part 3. June. pp. 229-269; Part 4. Aug. pp. 493-525.

[78] Evgeny Petrovich Novikov (1826-1903), Secretary at the Russian Embassy in Constantinople. Novikov effectively ran the embassy when the ambassador was not in residence.

[79]Patisia is now a suburb of Athens, but was then a neighbouring village.

[80] In keeping with the instructions that the correspondence with the monastery have no official character he deliberately omitted from the face of the letter itself the name of the recipient, his own name as sender, and the date. It can be inferred from the later diary entry (March 10) that this letter was promptly composed and sent to Azarius after Antonin received his instructions on February 26, and it is filed by the monastery as communication from Antonin to Azarius. Antonin was hoping for a quick response from Azarius before finalizing his visit, but because the mail boat omitted docking at St Panteleimon's pier because of adverse weather, Azarius did not receive his letter when anticipated and so could not reply in time before Antonin's departure. Azarius put the reply into Antonin's hand when the latter arrived on March 15.

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> I know that you have no secrets and cannot have any. But I beg you to make an exception for me from the general rule - on the grounds that I am a secular person and do not come under your rules,[81] and to tell me the following confidential information.
>
> Was the notorious Mr Constantine Simonides[82] in 1839 and 1840 living with his uncle in Russik and engaged in copying the Bible on parchment for presentation on behalf of the monastery to the late Emperor, Nikolai Pavlovich? Your Geronda[83] must know this matter in detail. And, undoubtedly, besides the Geronda, there are other people in the monastery who lived there in 1839 and 1840 and knew Simonides and all his affairs. Such an important undertaking as the copying of the entire Bible, which was being prepared for presentation to the Emperor, could not have escaped their notice.
>
> You see, His Grace, Master Kostandis,[84] has recently printed in European newspapers that the famous Codex Sinaiticus, about which the learned Tischendorf (and even before him, our Father Porphyry) has made so much noise, is the work of his own hand, made by him in your Russik a little over twenty years ago, and not fifteen hundred years ago, as Tischendorf supposes. As you will appreciate, the difference in years is considerable. To me, as an archaeologist, such an occurrence seems absolutely amazing, and I very much want to know how much truth there is in this unprecedented public statement of Simonides.
>
> Find out, most reverend father, how it happened, and hasten to satisfy my avid curiosity, which has been piqued to the highest degree.

Before the monastery knew of Antonin's impending visit, however, it had already seen the December 1862 edition of *Orthodox Review*,[85] and in its 'Foreign Notes' section the articles *Simonides' strange announcement about Codex Sinaiticus* and *Tischendorf's response to Simonides*,[86] and had prepared a response of their own to the magazine, signed off on March 4, 1863. Now that Antonin was on his way, they would place this reply in his hands to carry back by ship to Constantinople,[87] and ask him to use his connections in Russia to have the rebuttal published in the *Orthodox Review* as soon as possible.[88]

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[81] His meaning is that he is secular not regular clergy, i.e. not subject to rules of a monastery.
[82] ο περιβόητος κυρ Κωνσταντινος Σιμονίδης. This written in Greek, the rest in Russian.
[83] 'The Elder': the hegumen Gerasim is meant.
[84] A shortened form of Konstantinos. The titles are tongue in cheek.
[85] The editors of *Orthodox Review* sent it to them inviting comment.
[86] *Странное объявление Симонидеса о синайском кодексе и ответ Тишендорфа*, in *Православное Обозрение*, 1862, IX, pp.162-166.
[87] Following the Crimean war, Turkey would not allow its postal system to handle mail to or from Russian addresses.
[88] It appeared in the April issue of *Orthodox Review*.

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Antonin set off for Athos on March 14, taking the junior secretary at the Russian Embassy in Constantinople with him, the Russian diplomat Alexei Mikhailovich Kumani.[89] Antonin recorded aspects of their preparations, their visit to the St Panteleimon monastery, and the aftermath in his diary, of which what follows are relevant *extracts*:

> [March 9] There is no news from Athens.[90] No political news, either.
>
> [March 10] I went to see Evgeny Petrovich,[91] saw Baron Steiger[92] and decided to go to the Holy Mountain on Thursday [March 14] as I had not received a letter from Father Azariah – that was because the steamer did not dock at Russik on that occasion due to the south wind.[93] At home I drank and dozed. In the evening I wrote various papers.
>
> [March 12] From morning until three o'clock I wrote letters to Fr Porphyrius in St Petersburg and to Odessa. I sent the fourth 'Bithynia' article to the editors of *Christian Reading*.[94] I went to the bathhouse, put on a new cassock and supposedly refreshed myself. I searched through books all evening, looking for something relating to the city of Cius or also Prusias ad mare.[95] My eyes! My eyes!
>
> [March 13] I made some preparations for the journey.

[89] 1829-97. Greek by birth, son of Georgy Kuni and Irina Kumani. On the death of both parents in 1835 he and his brother were adopted by their relative Mikhail Nikolaevich Kumani, who was an Admiral in the Russian Navy, and whose father originally hailed from Crete (family Κουμάνης). The Kumani family produced generations of naval officers, and before transferring to diplomatic service Alexei Mikhailovich followed in the family footsteps by being apprenticed in 1842 with the Black Sea Navigation Company. He participated in domestic and foreign naval campaigns from 1845-52. He left naval service in 1855 and joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and went on to have a distinguished diplomatic career. Later in the 1860s he replaced Novikov as Secretary, and continued to have a role in investigating Codex Sinaiticus under the ambassador Ignatiev.

[90] From his friend Fr Gennadius.

[91] E. P. Novikov, Secretary at the Russian Embassy.

[92] Baron E.R. Steiger, Chief agent in Constantinople for the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (РОПиТ, or 'ROPiT') which operated the shipping line to Athos.

[93] Information that Baron Steiger would have known and conveyed.

[94] *Христианское чтение*. Part 4. Aug. pp. 493-525.

[95] City in Bithynia, renamed by king Prusias I of Bithynia.

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Antonin's fact-finding mission to Mount Athos

We continue to follow Antonin's diary for details of his daily activities on Athos.

> [March 14] I checked the time, and busied myself with getting away. Saw and conversed with Alexei Mikhailovich Kumani and Fr Gabriel. A different Alexei Mikhailovich brought passports and tickets from the agency[96]…We leave the house at 3 o'clock. Lord! Be patient with my sins and bring me home safely! Amen.
>
> I went round saying goodbye, and at the appointed hour with Father Gabriel and Andrew we set off for Tophane and to the familiar *Rusalka* there.[97] There we met Baron Steiger,[98] and a crew thoroughly unfamiliar to me. At just past 4 o'clock we weighed anchor and sailed swiftly into the Sea of Marmara. Soon Constantinople merged into one indistinguishable mass of irregularities, and having bidden him farewell we went to dinner. In the evening I went out on deck to admire the moonlit night, but the cold immediately drove me into the cabin, where Alexei Mikhailovich read *Time* to me till after midnight.[99]

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[96] Of ROPiT, the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company.

[97] *Rusalka* (Russian 'Mermaid'), a 40-metre paddle steamer, wooden hulled, in service from 1846 to 1868. For details of this vessel see Appendix 2.

[98] Chief agent for the ROPiT shipping agency whose vessel the *Rusalka* was in port.

[99] *Время*, a monthly magazine from 1861-63 published by Fyodor Dostoevsky that serialized and popularized his novels. Banned by the Russian government in May 1863.

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[March 15] At around 8 o'clock we came into sight of the Dardanelles and were stuck there for almost an hour. Soon we entered the archipelago,[100] and around midday we could already make out ahead of us the snowy peak of Athos in the clouds, which I then studied closely until the evening, trying three times to draw it. By the time we approached close to it, it was already getting dark. With binoculars it was just possible to make out the Lavra, the Moldavian skete and the steep slopes of the mountain. The Kafsokalivia, Karoulia, St Anna and New Sketes could only be recognized by their lights, or, to be more precise, by the stories of Father Savva Ilyinsky. Going around the mountains, the steamer whistled, announcing its untimely arrival. Finally Russik came in. At about eight o'clock we arrived at its pier.[101] There were many changes to its appearance,[102] the most prominent of which were the coastal store and the anchor buoy[103]... Now Fr Nikon appeared on the ship, and a quarter of an hour later we were already on the shore. The gates of the monastery were shut and there was dead silence inside.

The St Panteleimon monastery, 1860s

[100] The Aegean.

[101] The journey was thus 28 hours' sailing.

[102] He was last at St Panteleimon in 1859, only four years earlier.

[103] These had been added in fulfilment of a contract between the St Panteleimon monastery and the ROPiT shipping company in 1862. In order that St Panteleimon would be a regular stopping point the monastery were obliged to store goods for lading and discharge, as well as providing ticketing, a waiting room for passengers etc. ROPiT was the only means of getting mail to and from Russia and the Ottoman empire (in which Mount Athos was until 1912) because following the Crimean War, Turkey did not permit Russian mail to be handled by the postal service in the Ottoman Empire. It was a matter that Baron Steiger tried to resolve in Constantinople, without success. It was eventually resolved in the late nineteenth century, but before that ROPiT was a lifeline for mail from Russia.

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It was pleasant to see familiar places again. We went up to the Russian half. Fathers Ieronim[104] and Makarios[105] were already expecting us. The meeting was full of consolation. After jam and tea, we went to the living quarters. Soon Fr Azariah[106] came up, handing me a letter he had prepared for me on the last ship about the affairs of Simonides.[107] It turns out that that his claim to have produced the Sinai Bible was as false as everything else that came out of his shameless mouth. The all-night vigil lasted from 9 o'clock until 4 o'clock in the morning, but I did not make it to the end, being utterly exhausted by the journey and the lack of sleep.

[March 16] I saw the elders Ezekiel[108] and Seraphim[109] and other acquaintances. Went to bow to the Geronda,[110] from whom I received a solemn assurance that from 1821 to the present day, that is, throughout his whole time as hegumen, no one in the monastery had any thought of presenting the late sovereign with a counterfeit codex of the Bible, and consequently Mr Simonides could not have been given such a commission by anyone.[111] When I returned to my cell, I was greeted by a dozen rotten manuscripts and old printed matter, which were to become my property. I sent my companion[112] to the monasteries, and myself read my initial article on Bithynia in the November issue of *Christian Reading*.[113] I went to the cathedral for

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[104] A Russian hieromonk (1802 – 1885). Entered Athos in 1836, and moved to St Panteleimon in 1840 and knew Simonides there. He was involved in the management of the monastery and discipled Makarios (see next).

[105] A Russian hieromonk (1820–1889). Arrived on Athos in 1851, thus *not* a witness to Simonides in 1840, and accordingly does not appear on the letter to the Holy Synod. In 1875 he became the first Russian hegumen of the Monastery of St Panteleimon, succeeding Gerasim.

[106] A Russian lay monk, librarian. Entered St Panteleimon in 1851, thus *not* a witness to Simonides in 1840, and accordingly does not appear on the letter to the Holy Synod. Became the monastery's librarian in 1860 and with Antonin published the acts of the monastery. Had been corresponding with Antonin since 1859. Died 1878.

[107] According to Lora Gerd, *Russian research in the archives of Mount Athos* (2019), Azarius' reply is dated March 4, the same date as the letter from the brothers of the monastery to 'Orthodox Review'. Azarius sent another on this topic dated April 2, carried on the *Rusalka* and received by Antonin in Constantinople on April 4, to which he responded on April 10.

[108] A Russian hieromonk (1810 – 1886) who entered the St Panteleimon monastery in 1836 and knew Simonides during his time there 1839-41.

[109] A Russian monk. A great benefactor, he entered the monastery in 1843 and died in 1864. Thus *not* a witness to Simonides in 1840, and accordingly does not appear on the letter to the Holy Synod.

[110] The hegumen, Gerasim (1772-1875). Nominated by hegumen Savvas to succeed him on his death in 1821, and acting hegumen from that date. Because of the Greek war of independence, formal election and ratification was delayed until 1833. Gerasim was hegumen during the time of Simonides on Athos 1839-41 and very close to Benedict and Prokopios Dendrinos, who were also at the deathbed of hegumen Savvas. Died 1875.

[111] Over the subsequent days until Antonin's departure from Athos, Gerasim was putting this testimony into writing in Greek (and having an accurate translation made into Russian) including, in addition to himself, the concurrence to the testimony of the twenty monks, fully identified, who knew Simonides in 1839-40 and were still alive in the monastery in 1863. All refuted him.

[112] Alexei Kumani.

[113] *Поездка в Вифинию* ('*Trip to Bithynia*') in *Христианское чтение* (1862), Nov. pp. 660-701.

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vespers, was captivated by its decoration and the order of service, casually glanced into the eyes of Archimandrite Gabriel and recalled something of the past. I saw the genuine work of Simonides – the Greek service book copied by him in 1841 in the handwriting of the XVII century.[114] I went to the library and in it saw an unwritten paper book that gave Simonides a pretext[115] to lie; I rested at home until dark. Then I sat at Fr Ierome's until 11 o'clock, listening to his most interesting spiritual conversation …For this discourse alone it was worth it for me to come to Athos. And the venerable elder told me much more. He holds the post of confessor and leader of monks with dignity and righteousness.

I also confessed at his shrine. Returning to my cell, I read Vespers and tried to sleep, but, of course, in vain. At twelve o'clock they called to matins.

[March 17] Straight after lunch we got ready to head out. Fathers Makarios and Azariah agreed to be my companions. We sailed by boat to the Kastamonitou pier.[116] From there we rode to the monastery on mules.[117] We inspected the dilapidated church and poor library, admired the elder Joseph,[118] marveled at the red-bearded polyglot Gregory of Ephesus, ate jam with water, asked the elder about Sinai and its library, but did not glean anything about the Bible codex.[119] To the sad, desolate ringing of bells we rode on. About an hour and a half later we reached Zografou,[120] extricated the hegumen from vespers, sat for half an hour in the archondarik,[121] was treated to tea, and rode on. By dusk we reached Hilandar.[122] Now we went to the church, searching for the founder's inscription on the marble, but there was none. Amazing! Where then did it come from in my Athos notebook? We had a meal

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[114] Such manuscript copies in Simonides' handwriting and under his name on Mount Athos continue until *at least* September 1841, which demonstrates that his claim to have left the monastery in 1840 and spent almost the whole of 1841 in Constantinople was false.

[115] Повод. Cause, ground, reason, motive, chance, excuse. His point is that this is how Simonides got the idea about blank books.

[116] Officially Kōnstamonitou monastery, but commonly known as Kastamonitou, as here.

[117]Some distance inland in a valley, not visible from the shore.

[118] Possibly Joseph of Xirapotamou, who was overseeing repairs and construction work ongoing at Konstamonitou.

[119] In his 1859 notes he had written 'Its buildings are very dilapidated, probably not so much from antiquity as from poor construction and insufficient maintenance. The elders are thinking of moving the monastery, following Russik's example, to the sea, where they have a good *arsanas* [dock/harbour] with a sheltered jetty.' However, the situation was overtaken by events. In order to sweeten up the monks at St Catherine's in Sinai in relation to a transfer of Codex Sinaiticus, and in recognition of the loss of income they would sustain from the confiscation of their estates in Romania, the Russians in permitted St Catherine's to raise funds for their monastery within Russia during the 1860s. Two monks from Sinai had a very successful time doing so. Moreover, monks from St Catherine's arrived in 1860 at Konstamonitou with funds, and from 1860-67 they stayed and made repairs, and built a new wing and the *Katholikon*. 'The elder' whom Antonin interrogates about Sinai, St Catherine's library and the Codex Sinaiticus was surely one of those monks.

[120] A Bulgarian monastery.

[121] Visitors' reception rooms.

[122] The only Serbian monastery on Mount Athos, but dominated by Bulgarians at this time.

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among Panselin's archangels.[123] In the archondarik we were compassed about by elders and the bishop of Preslav.[124] We talked for a long time about the monastery's affairs, which had been greatly upset by the death of Fr Archimandrite Sophronios. The dinner was filled with the noisy wit of the interlocutors, especially of Fr Onuphrius the Great (windbag). Somehow we got to bed.

[March 18] It was a wonderfully enjoyable ride through the mountains. We had a snack at the Zografou post, and reached Karyes around midday.[125] We sat in the Russian *konaki*,[126] and went to Koutloumousiou's cemetery church to look at the icon painting of the alleged Panselin of 1771. We visited the Predtecheva's cell,[127] in the church painted by Dionysios Furnoagrafiot, and saw the chicanery of Simonides,[128] and perhaps of our own Patisian Gennadius.[129] Having finished with Karyan affairs, we moved to the skete of St Andrew the Apostle[130]… Returned to Russik in the quiet and warm night by the light of the moon.

[March 19] At midnight the wind rose, so my heart was sad.[131] I slept through Matins. Having got up, I immediately began writing. Around 8 o'clock the *Rusalka* appeared in the distance. The wind began to die down little by little, and the sun came out as it had the day before, although without yesterday's warmth. Lunch around 12 o'clock. Then a trip to the archimandrite cell to see the great elder Hilarion[132] and to the cell

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[123] Frescoes by the legendary painter 'Manuel Panselinos'.
[124] Preslav, former capital of the Bulgarian Empire and its spiritual and literary centre where the Slavic written language was developed, and the Golden Age of Bulgaria took place during the rule of Tsar Simeon I (reigned 893 – 927).
[125] Karyes is the main settlement (just a village) central on the peninsular, a transport hub with shops and a market. Karyes has a cathedral known as the Protaton, the official seat of the president of the Athos monastic community.
[126] The official residence of the St Panteleimon monastery in Karyes. From the Turkish word *konak*, meaning a large official residence in the Ottoman Empire. Each of the 20 monasteries on Mount Athos maintained an official residence in Karyes (in the case of Koutloumousiou they do not need a separate *konaki* as their monastery is hard by Karyes, so there are 19 *konaki* in Karyes) with their official representative in residence there who was a member of the 20-strong governing council for the Holy Mount, known as the Holy Community. At the time of Antonin's visit the representative in residence there from St Panteleimon was confessor Savva (1797-1873), who had arrived at Mount Athos in 1818 and had known Simonides at the monastery in 1840. Evidence in the library of the Holy Community at Karyes proves that Simonides was still on Mount Athos in September 1841 copying manuscripts.
[127] 'The Forerunner', i.e. John the Baptist.
[128] Simonides had defaced the dates and attributions to make the images appear centuries older than they were.
[129] Surely a wry joke thrown in, like his reference to Fr Savva Ilyinsky in his entry of March 15.
[130] Built by Russian monastics in 1842 under the sponsorship of the Russian Tsar and populated by Russians. Officially a dependency of Vatopedi monastery.
[131] The steamers used a combination of steam and wind for propulsion. Antonin is sad because the favourable wind would make the passage through the Aegean easy, so the vessel would soon arrive and he would have to leave.
[132] Greek hierodeacon (1810 – 1886). Deputy to hegumen Gerasim. Entered St Panteleimon in 1837 and was thoroughly familiar with Simonides' activities 1839-41.

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of elder Seraphim. With the first I started a difficult conversation about the need for some striking miracle in favour of Christianity for the modern world, but the elder showed little sympathy for my view, being filled with the deepest and liveliest faith. With the second we drank tea, without starting any special conversations. At 3 o'clock we returned with the father confessor to the monastery. We started getting ready. After we had finished, I went down to Father Macarius, waking him from his sleep. Father Ierome and the captain of the steamer also came up. Having said goodbye to the Russian half, we all went to the Geronda,[133] and from there to the cathedral church, where the singers sang 'Now lettest Thou depart',[134] and we venerated the relics of the great martyr. We left the monastery to the sound of bells and crossed over to the *Lastochka*[135] (sorry, the *Rusalka*).[136] Half an hour later - hugs, kisses and prostrations. Then once again the sound of bells, drowned out by the noise of the water churned by the paddle wheels, and sight of the receding Russik. Peace be upon him from us, and from him to us! Xiropotamou, Grigoriou, Simonos Petras with its buildings, Dionysiou, the memorable Agiou Pavlou, the captivating New Skete, Great and Little St Anne, Karoulia, Kerasia and the formidable peak, completely covered in snow. Darkness, cold wind, rolling and a little despondency. In the cabin, read *Time*,[137] and at about eight o'clock went to bed.

[March 20] It took an extra five hours to get to the Dardanelles, i.e., a total of seventeen hours from Russik. The weather was gloomy. Winter wind. The whole day we dragged along the strait, making five knots an hour and being carried back by the current at four knots. Before evening we passed Lampsacus and Gallipoli. In the evening, reading again, followed by sleep again….There is no rolling, but it is bitterly cold.

[March 21] I was just about to go out to look at the island of Marmara, which I had never seen before, when Alexei Mikhailovich announced that the Castle of Seven Towers was already before us! Well done, our *Rusalka*! I went out on deck. Indeed, Istanbul was right under our noses. [138] Rain and snow were pouring down from the sky on it and on us. Soon we rounded the horn and dropped anchor at Tophane. Thank God!

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[133] The hegumen Gerasim.

[134] Antonin gives the traditional Russian title Ныне отпускаешь here for the Song of Simeon traditionally known in the West as the *Nunc dimittis*, which would likely have been sung in Greek, Νῦν ἀπολύεις.

[135] Russian 'Swallow'.

[136] *Rusalka* and *Lastochka* were a pair of identical ships in the shipping company, plying the same routes. They would not have been easily distinguishable other than by their name plates.

[137] *Время*, a monthly magazine from 1861-63 published by Fyodor Dostoevsky that serialized and popularized his novels. Banned by the Russian government in May 1863.

[138] Unusually, Antonin here does call it Istanbul rather than Constantinople, though arguably the Ottoman name derives from the Greek εἰς τὴν Πόλιν.

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Dargo *(renamed* Lastochka*), identical sister ship to* Andia *(renamed* Rusalka*)*

Antonin's Report to the Holy Synod

Once he arrived back in Constantinople Antonin wasted no time in making his official reports, communicating his findings made at St Panteleimon. After checking the news from over the last week he gave a verbal report to Novikov, the secretary at the Russian Embassy (and Kumani's direct superior), and telegraphed a dispatch to the Holy Synod of All Russia about the results of his assignment.

> [March 21] Practical matters completed, I went ashore and settled back into my rooms, where I found everything in order. I read the accumulated newspapers, went to Evgeny Petrovich,[139] composed a telegraphic dispatch to the Synod, met with some people, etc.
>
> [March 26] I sent a report to St Petersburg about my trip to Athos[140]…I strongly denounced my dear fellow craftsman Master Simonides![141]

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[139] Novikov, Secretary at the Russian Embassy, Kumani's superior. To report on his return and findings.

[140] Addressed to Metropolitan Isidore of Novgorod and St Petersburg, who had given him his instructions. He included the letter for the *Orthodox Review*, as well as the testimony of hegumen Gerasim supported by twenty other witnesses, and an accurate translation of the same. On April 10 he responded to a letter from Azarius dated April 2 to inform him that 'your letter about Simonides has long ago been sent to the "Orthodox Review" [and] that no hazard whatsoever for your holy monastery is envisaged as a result of the most venerable Fr Porphyrius' pamphlet', which pamphlet asserted that the New Testament of the Codex had been copied from exemplars that had been corrupted by heretics. Simonides' false narrative was that all the principal monks were agreed in producing such a work, whose text, if Uspensky was right, was heterodox.

[141] There is irony here, of course. This was not quite the end of the discussions about Simonides for a week later on April 2, 1863 Antonin records: 'Archimandrite Nil of the Holy Mountain and Konstantinos of Sinai were visiting. We discussed Simonides.'

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Antonin's report to Metropolitan Isidore of Novgorod and St Petersburg was very succinct because the powerful evidence was contained in the letters enclosed with it:

> In pursuance of the commission given to me by the Holy Synod on January 29 of this year, immediately upon receipt of letters from your Eminence I set out for Athos. Upon arrival in Russik, on the 16th of the current month,[142] I immediately began collecting information about Simonides' stay there in 1839, and about the true nature of the news he disseminated regarding the origin of the Codex Sinaiticus. First of all, it turned out to be impossible to interrogate the persons to whom Simonides refers in his testimony, for they all have long since passed away.[143] It remained to be content with the testimony of the brothers of the monastery who lived in it during the time of Simonides,[144] and especially the hegumen of the monastery himself, Fr archimandrite Gerasim, manager of the monastery since 1821. The testimony of this highly respected person leaves not the slightest doubt that Simonides' extraordinary claim is baseless, and is as false as practically everything that comes from the hands or mouth of this notorious deceiver.[145]
>
> The monastery had already learned of the article in the *Guardian* newspaper,[146] according to the report of it in the *Orthodox Review* (December 1862), and had prepared a response for this magazine, which the editorial board of the *Orthodox*

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[142] Antonin arrived late on the 15th. In Athos the day commenced at sunset, not midnight, so it was actually the March 16th there. Matins began at midnight.

[143] This statement is correct. Antonin of course perceived that the 'deacon Hilarion' whom Simonides included in his account was not the *hierodeacon* (i.e. a monk ordained as a deacon) at St Panteleimon but a namesake deacon (who was not a monk) in Constantinople running an errand for the Patriarch, whom Simonides had invented for the purpose. His *alter ego* Kallinikos mentions the deacon Hilarion in Smyrna. All those who corresponded about this and gave Antonin his commission naturally perceived the same, and so did not consider that Antonin should be interviewing a Hilarion at St Panteleimon since he did not figure in Simonides' account there. Simonides was careful not to identify *hierodeacon* Hilarion at St Panteleimon, just as he was careful never to mention the hegumen Gerasim (pretending that Benedict was hegumen) for they were eyewitness of what Simonides got up to in 1840, and were still alive in the 1860s. Indeed they both went on to give testimony against him to the Holy Synod. Since the Hilarion mentioned by Simonides was in Constantinople, and a deacon not a hierodeacon, there were no persons at St Panteleimon whom Simonides mentions in his account who were still alive. He would, of course, have known that, since he made a return visit in 1851, and would have discovered then that the celebrated Prokopios Dendrinos and Dionysios had both died in 1848. The Russian lay monk Pavel never existed, but if the hieromonk by the same name was meant then Simonides knew that he had died in 1840 while Simonides was still at the monastery, as indeed had Benedict. Hieromonk Kallinikos never existed – there was no Kallinikos at the monastery until the 1860s. Accordingly, Simonides only mentioned the names of those whom he knew could never be contacted, and he studiously avoided giving the names of any who could be contacted. He added to his deception, trying to make it appear more credible and reasonable, by stating the many of the persons he mentioned were likely still alive, though he knew for certain that they were not.

[144] That is, in 1839-41.

[145] Обманщика: deceiver; charlatan; bluffer; delusionist; dissembler; hoaxer.

[146] Of September 3, 1862, in which Simonides claimed to have written the Codex.

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> *Review* instructed me to pass on to them.[147] In forwarding the said reply to your Eminence, I have the honour to humbly ask you to forward it on to their address, if there are no important obstacles to its publication. Quite independently of this response, Fr Archimandrite Gerasim, at my request, produced a formal response about the same matter to the Holy Synod in the most accurate and dispassionate terms possible, which I also have the honour to forward to your Eminence along with the accompanying accurate translation of it into Russian. According to the venerable Fr Hegumen, the latter document[148] could be published in some European newspaper in the original,[149] in order to expose Simonides' lies.

It is noteworthy that Gerasim and the other witnesses were keen to have the letter published in original form (Greek) in the Western press (here described as 'European'). Antonin duly conveyed that wish with the deliverables from the monastery to Metropolitan Isidore of Novgorod and St Petersburg on March 26, who in turn passed on that original request, with the letters, to Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, on April 15, who in turn conveyed the letters A.P. Akhmatov, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod on April 21, 1863, adding that 'for the credibility of the case, in my opinion it is necessary to publish the report of Archimandrite Gerasim to the Holy Synod.' That is likely to have happened, but it was with Akhmatov that the desire for wider publication in Europe of their testimony to the Holy Synod was not fulfilled. We must suppose that the Russian government was not in favour of uncontrolled dissemination since no more is heard of the testimony for 25 years, when its existence (with Russian translation) and archival locations[150] were published with a transcript.

Иларіонъ, іеродіаконъ, лице весьма близкое къ игумену и къ покойному Венедикту.
Савва, духовникъ, проживающій теперь на Карсѣ.
Никифоръ, *Доровей*, *Неофитъ*, *Гавріилъ* іеромонахи.
Мисаилъ, главный экономъ.
Филаретъ, архондаричій.
Досиѳей, *Анатій*, *Савва*, *Аврамій*, *Самуилъ*, монахи. всѣ греки.
Іоанникій, *Григорій*, *Софроній*, *Максимъ*, монахи изъ болгаръ.
Іеронимъ, духовникъ русскій, поселившійся въ монастырь въ 1840 г. не только лично знавшій Симонида, но и содѣйствовавшій къ его удаленію изъ монастыря. Онъ непзбѣжно долженъ былъ знать все, что Симонидъ дѣлалъ въ монастырѣ.
Евѳимій, іеромонахъ русскій.
Геронтій, монахъ русскій.

Russian transcript of the 20 supporting witnesses against Simonides

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[147] It appears, quite naturally, that the editors of the *Orthodox Review* had sent details of the report to the St Panteleimon monastery asking for their comments.
[148] That is, the testimony to the Holy Synod.
[149] That is, the original Greek version.
[150] въ архивѣ Св. Сѵиода, по описи № 60, докуй. №№ 14 и 15.

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The letter from St Panteleimon appearing in the *Orthodox Review*, April 1863

We read with extreme surprise on the pages of your journal (December 1862, pp. 162-164) the news of the strange statement of Mr Simonides. Regarding this statement, we humbly ask the editors of the "Orthodox Review" to make space on the pages of their journal for a few lines of our own.

First of all, let us state that we decided to write these lines by no means as a response to Master Constantine, and not at all intending to enter into any kind of controversy with him, a player well known to us; but we are writing this solely to reveal the truth and to show the true course of the matter, because without this others may, if not waver in their conviction, then at least be perplexed for some time. Mr Simonides, spinning his yarn in a distant land from us, probably thought that it would not reach us. Otherwise, it is impossible to explain his unheard-of boldness. Meanwhile, half of the inhabitants of the monastery from the period he indicates, whom he so shamelessly slanders, are still alive, and can all stand face to face with him before the whole world! However, perhaps he does not care about this... With this last act of his he has truly "exceeded everyone's expectations".[151]

In 1839, Constantine Simonides really was in our monastery, though not among the brotherhood, but as a guest. He was a poor[152] boy,[153] who, it is true, could write in Greek, but nothing more. To entrust him with such a task as copying the entire Bible, and, moreover, in the ancient script of the 4th century, examples of which he could not even view in our monastery (nor perhaps on the whole of Mount Athos), would have been sheer folly. Yes, and besides, Benedict, whom Simonides identifies as his uncle, never was the hegumen of our monastery. But both before 1839, and in that year, and thereafter up to the present day, by the blessing of God, the monastery has been governed by Elder *Gerasim*, who has been its hegumen since 1821. And we hope, with the help of God, that Hegumen Gerasim will never in the future give a moment's thought to composing spurious manuscripts, just as it has never occurred to him in the past. *Benedict*, who died in 1841, was neither an uncle nor a relative of Simonides, but only a fellow countryman.[154] The good old man really spoke up for his fellow islander[155] with the right people so that he could stay here for a while for his spiritual benefit. But the youngster by his conduct did not justify Elder Benedict's concern for him, and soon therefore the future glorious adventurer was denied any further hospitality here. Despite this, however, at the request of Benedict, the elder *Prokopios* (and not patriarchs *Anthimus* and *Constantine*, with whom Simonides did not have, and could not have had, any relations at that time) interceded for Simonides before Countess Edling and A. S.

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[151] It is in quotes in the original, and a Russian idiom: literally 'he surpassed himself', but with the meaning given.

[152] Бедный, which as in English can mean unfortunate or impoverished.

[153] Мальчик, a male child from before birth up to puberty. Simonides was turning 15 when he arrived in Athos in 1839.

[154] That is, from the same island of Syme. Syme was not part of Greece until 1948.

[155] Земляке, a person from the same town or district. In this case, a resident of the same island.

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Sturdza; for 'daskal' Prokopios was known to the Countess.[156] As a result of this intercession, Simonides was accepted under the patronage of Mr Sturdza, who placed him at his own expense in the Odessa Richelieu Lyceum to learn to read and write (him, who had already copied the entire Bible in the handwriting of the 4th century, with tens of thousands of notes?.. yes, him – Simonides!). But alas, the brilliant young man justified neither the care of the elder Benedict nor the care of Mr Sturdza, and he was soon expelled from the Lyceum in disgrace.[157]

In 1839 and 1840, neither the elder Benedict, nor anyone else from our monastery, had the idea of bringing any gift to Emperor Nicholas I of blessed memory on account of any donations; because by that year the monastery had not yet seen any donations from the late sovereign, and it would have been inappropriate for us to bring a gift. The first favour shown to our monastery by the late emperor at rest in God was in 1842, in permitting us to make an alms collection in Russia; but by then Simonides was no longer with us, so there was no one to compose fake manuscripts.

Simonides in his article mentions hieromonk *Prokopios* and the Russian monk *Paul*, on whose advice Benedict allegedly undertook to present the manuscript. Prokopios was indeed here and died in 1848, but we do not know the Russian monk Paul.[158] Then Simonides speaks of passages from the seven apostolic fathers: Barnabas, Hermas, and others. But such passages, as far as we know, were not found here by the most careful research, even by the most enlightened men, such as Archimandrite Porphyrius and others. We do not hear about them even now on Athos: Simonides probably saw them in some delirious dream-state. Further, according to Simonides, the important work of copying the Bible was entrusted to the monastery secretary *Dionysios*, which he declined, finding the task beyond his abilities. We do not know what secretary Simonides is idly talking about. Dionysios the calligrapher was definitely in the monastery, but there was no secretary Dionysios. Simonides also mentions a printed Bible of the Moscow edition, which was allegedly used by him as a manual in compiling the famous manuscript. But whether and to what extent such publications can serve as

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[156] Russian transliteration of Greek δάσκαλος, a schoolmaster.

[157] The 'graduation' lists of 1841, 1842 and 1843 do not include Constantine Simonides, and thus confirm that he did not complete his studies. Amphilocius, later Bishop of Pelusium, who as at the Academy at the same time as Simonides and knew him there, testifies to the same.

[158] Simonides' account in the December 1862 edition of *Orthodox Review* had been translated from English into Russian as 'іеромонаху Прокопію и русскому монаху Павлу', showing Prokopios as an *ordained* priest-monk and Paul as a *lay* monk. The Orthodox carefully distinguish between lay monks and priest-monks, as here. Accordingly, the authors correctly stated that they knew of no *lay* monk Paul in the monastery, though they had of course known of an *ordained* Russian monk of the same name, who lived only a few months in the monastery before his decease. Simonides' original account, written in Greek, was translated into English for the *Guardian* as 'the herald Procopius and the Russian monk Paul', but 'herald' is a mistranslation of his Greek *hierokerux* (ordained preacher), which was the title of Prokopios Dendrinos (as evidenced also in Simonides' *Barnabas*). Accordingly, whether in English or Russian, Simonides appeared to have Paul down as a layman, a *monachos*, and there was no lay monk by that name in St Panteleimon.

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an aid in the execution of such an important undertaking as compiling a manuscript, which from the nature of its script and other features appears attributable to the 4th century, we do not undertake to decide, but leave the matter to the judgment of people more enlightened than we are. Simonides also says that he found in our library an entire ancient, thick, unwritten parchment book, into which he copied the Bible. It is strange to suppose the existence of such a book in any library, and for us, who have not seen it in ours, it is simply impossible. But here is another odd thing: Simonides, at the end of the description of his adventures on Athos, says that the book (i.e. the Bible he created) came into his possession.[159] This could only have happened if he had stolen it. But Simonides has not yet come to the point of admitting publicly that he is a thief.

The main point in this whole affair is the following. We must ask Simonides: did *the real hegumen* of the monastery know about all the shenanigans that were started (let us assume for now that he really did start them) with his supposed uncle Benedict and others? We have already said that the hegumen was the elder Gerasim, who is still the hegumen. Had he known, then it is certain that Simonides would not have written two lines of the aforementioned Bible; for what hegumen would agree to commend his monastery with a work of falsehood and fakery, and moreover in the eyes of an emperor of like faith? Shall we suppose that he did not know? But Simonides himself says that the deed was not carried out secretly, but solemnly and for an important purpose. But there is no need to say any more. The matter can be resolved simply enough: *come and see*. The hegumen from Simonides' time is still alive. And besides him, there are quite a number of persons still in the monastery who knew Simonides and saw his deeds.[160] Go to whomever you wish and ask them!

We will not undertake to comment on the wanderings of Simonides outside Athos with his supposed creation. Let others speak about that. It is worth noting here, however, that Simonides does well to refer to the dead in the story of his adventures on Athos and beyond Athos. The dead are patient, unlike us, the living. The dead have no shame. But we, the living, are ashamed of the chicanery of this shameless man.

Here is a sincere account of Simonides' fable about his compilation of a fake manuscript in our monastery on Athos. But if, as Mr Tischendorf expresses it, *mundus vult decipi*,[161] and *volenti non fit injuria*,[162] then we, putting hand on heart, also say: whoever may speak and think as it suits them, for our part the matter would be expressed in good faith. And that is sufficient.

On Holy Mount Athos, in the Russian monastery of the Great Martyr St Panteleimon.

March 4, 1863.

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[159] Interestingly, Tischendorf said the same of the 43 leaves that he purloined in 1844.
[160] Twenty-one living witnesses, in fact.
[161] Lat. 'The world wants to be deceived'.
[162] Lat. 'No injury is done to the willing'.

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The letter from Hegumen Gerasim and twenty other named witnesses

To the Most Holy Governing Synod of All Russia.

Having become aware of the implausible and utterly insane notion recently spread by a certain Constantine Simonides, that the famous ancient manuscript containing the entire Old and New Testaments was written by himself in Athos in 1839-1840, at what we call the Russian monastery of St Panteleimon the Great Martyr, on the advice and desire of the former hegumen of the said monastery at that time, I have the high honour to assure the Most Holy Governing Synod of All Russia that, from 1821 to this day, I have occupied the hegumenate of the monastery of St Panteleimon the Great Martyr, on the holy mount Athos, and I was and am able perfectly to know everything that happened in the said monastery during 1839-40. So I testify that—

1) During the aforementioned time (and in all other years throughout my entire hegumenate) there was no talk, not even a mere thought, either from me or from anyone else within the monastery, of bringing as a gift to the ever-memorable Emperor Nicholas a copy of the Holy Scriptures, supposedly ancient in the nature of the letters and written on parchment, but in fact new and, in a manner of speaking, counterfeit. The strangeness of such an enterprise amazes me, and, in my humble opinion, this alone sufficiently proves the shameless lies of Mr Simonides, who is known for his evil qualities.[163]

2) My venerable and learned friend of blessed memory, hierodeacon Benedict, had never been hegumen of the monastery of St Panteleimon the Great Martyr and could not have started any enterprise without my knowledge, as much according to the communal rules of the monastery as to his good personal disposition towards me.

3) The same must be said of the late Archimandrite Prokopios,[164] as well as of the Russian hieromonk Pavel (I never knew the monk Pavel)[165] who also died long ago.[166]

4) Calligrapher ('beautiful writer'[167]) Dionysios was certainly living in our community in 1839-40, but was not its secretary (or even a simple scribe).[168]

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[163] Злым: wicked; evil; malicious; diabolical; vicious.
[164] Died August 1848.
[165] This is the clearest indication that Gerasim and the brothers carefully distinguished between laymen and priests. Gerasim of course knew the famous *hieromonk* Pavel, but he knew of no lay monk by that name, and Simonides' letter to the *Guardian* had identified a 'monk Paul', i.e. a layman.
[166] Died August 1840.
[167] Красыописецъ: Literally 'red writer'.
[168] The translation into Russian appearing in the December 1862 issue of *Orthodox Review* of Simonides' letter in the Guardian of September 3, 1862 (itself a translation into English from his Greek original) used the term секретаря where the English version had employed 'calligrapher'. This Russian word, meaning secretary, amanuensis or scribe, was an unfortunate choice to describe

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5) A parchment book of enormous size, ancient and covered with writing, with the title: "Collection of solemn words" never existed in the library of our monastery.

6) I doubt very much whether copies of the Holy Scriptures could then (and even now) be found in the libraries of the Holy Mountain that are as ancient as the Sinai manuscript appears to be, according to the judgment of Messrs. Porphyrius and Tischendorf.

7) At that time, the late Benedict, exhausted by extreme old age,[169] was entirely devoted to prayer and would not have cared to engage in any earthly work (let alone forgery and counterfeit writing).

8) Indeed, he did not have the slightest thought about the merits of his young compatriot,[170] whom he kept by him and fed only out of mercy.

9) In my opinion, Mr Simonides in 1839-40 was completely incapable of such a great and important work, the creator of which he freely and unashamedly promotes himself to be.

10) All the fathers and brothers resident in our monastery who lived here in 1839-40 testify to me in all of the above.

Dionysios: his function had been lost in translation. Metropolitans Filaret and Isidore did not make this error because they had been sent newspaper cuttings from London by Popov, possibly accompanied by Popov's own translation. St Panteleimon never saw the English version that appeared in the *Guardian*, only the Russian (mis)translation of it in *Orthodox Review*. In any case, although Dionysios may have done some calligraphy, it was occasional and not his regular duty in the monastery. He was Μουσικολογιώτατος καί Χαρτοφύλαξ τής Μεγάλης "Εκκλησίας, i.e. 'His Eminence of Musicology and Records Keeper of the Great Church'. He is included among those whom Savva 'gathered as a complete staff, renowned for virtue and monastic precision' (Σάββας Ιερομόναχος, μακράν καί τού ελαχίστου τοπικισμού συνέλεξε πλήρες προσοπικόν φημιζόμενον επ᾽ αρετή, καί Μοναχική ακριβεία) along with Gerasim, Benedict, and Prokopios Dendrinos. He died in 1848, the same year as Prokopios Dendrinos. It was upon the death of these two (Dionysios and Prokopios Dendrinos) that year that hierodeacon Hilarion (who had joined St Panteleimon in 1837) stepped forward and assumed much of the administration of the monastery, being the right-hand man and deputy of Gerasim. Hilarion had also been very close to Benedict, and he was intimately familiar with all the matters concerning Simonides' stay in 1839-41.

[169] Benedict was well over 100 years of age. 'Extreme old age' (in Russian глубокою старостью, literally 'profound old age') is an expression Gerasimos uses of himself on May 9, 1875, the day before his death aged 103: βαθυτατον γερας: 'most profound old age'.

[170] That is, from the same island of Syme.

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These are:

Hilarion, hierodeacon, a person very close to the hegumen and to the late Benedict.

Savvas, confessor, currently residing in Karyes.

Nikiforos, Dorotheos, Neophytos, Gabriel, hieromonks.

Misael, chief *oikonomos* [steward].

Filaret, Archondarius.

Dositheos, Agapios, Savvas, Avramios, Samuel, monks. All Greeks.

Ioanniki, Gregori, Sofroni, Maxim, monks of the Bulgarians.

Ieronim, confessor, Russian, who settled in the monastery in 1840, not only personally knew Simonides, but also contributed to his removal from the monastery. He inevitably had to know everything that Simonides did in the monastery.

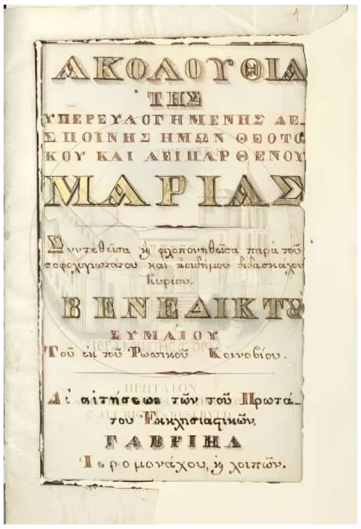
Ezekiel, Russian hieromonk.

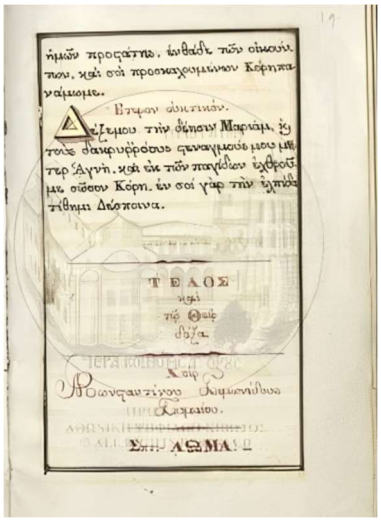
Gerontius, Russian monk.

Signed: Gerasim, Archimandrite of the Holy Russian Coenobium, with his brethren.

March 19, 1863, on the Holy Mountain.

We can put some meat on the bones of these men from the monastery records, which confirms that they were present in 1840 and still alive in the monastery in 1863, see Appendix 1. Simonides arrived at Mount Athos in November 1839 and did not leave Mount Athos until after September 1841, whereupon he travelled to Odessa via Constantinople under escort, arriving November 1841. He was thus under the eye of the authorities at St Panteleimon for around two years.


ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΑ
ΤΗΣ
ΥΠΕΡΕΥΛΟΓΗΜΕΝΗΣ ΔΕ-
ΣΠΟΙΝΗΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΘΕΟΤΟ-
ΚΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΕΙΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΥ
ΜΑΡΙΑΣ
Συντεθεῖσα μὲ ἐφεσινηθεῖσα παρὰ τοῦ
σοφωτάτου καὶ ἀειμνήστου διδασκάλου
Κυρίου.
ΒΕΝΕΔΙΚΤΟΥ
ΣΥΜΑΙΟΥ
Τοῦ ἐκ τοῦ Ρωσικοῦ Κοινοβίου.
Δι' αἰτήσεως τῶν τοῦ Πρωτά-
του Βουλγαρικῶν.
ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ
Ἱερομονάχου, μὲ χειρῶν.


ἡμῶν προσέταπε, ἐνθάδε τῶν οἰκουν-
των, καὶ σοὶ προσκαιρομένων κόπια-
ναμωμε.
Ἔτερον ἀκόλουθον.
Δέξαι μου τὴν ἄθλιον Μαριάμ, ἡ
τοὺς σαπρώδους στεναγμούς μου μὴ
περ ἀγνὴ, καὶ ὡς τῶν παγίδων ἐχθρῶν
μι, οὕτως Κύρι. ἐν σοὶ γὰρ τὴν ἐλπίδ
τίθημι Δέσποινα.
ΤΕΛΟΣ
καὶ
τῷ Θεῷ
δόξα.
Χεὶρ
Ρωσσαυστίνου Δημωνίδους
Καθιερέως.
Σφὶ ΑΩΜΑ

Manuscript copy on Mount Athos of a work by 'Benedict of Syme of the Russikon coenobium'.

Copied by the 'hand of Constantine Simonides of Syme, September 1841'.

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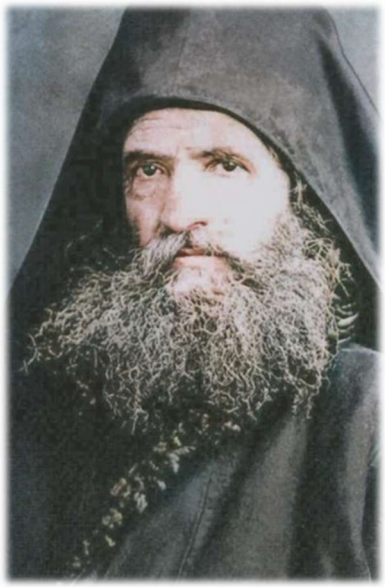
APPENDIX 1

Gerasim. Greek hieromonk (of Bulgarian ancestry). Born Georgy Vasilyevich (surname unknown) in 1772 in the village of Evdomista, diocese of Drama. Ordained a hierodeacon and hieromonk in the local ancient monastery of St Bogoroditsa Ikosifinitsa (Kormista, Macedonia). Entered Mount Athos in 1804 in the skete of St Anna. Transferred to Koutloumousiou monastery for one year, and then moved to St Panteleimon Monastery. Nominated by hegumen Savvas (d. 1821) as his successor, he became acting hegumen, but during the Greek uprising against the Turks he left the Holy Mountain and lived in Morea for 9 years; after the end of political strife he returned to St Panteleimon Monastery, where in 1830 he was formally elected hegumen, which was confirmed by the patriarch in 1833. He died on May 10, 1875.

Close to Benedict and Prokopios Dendrinos and intimately aware of the activities of Simonides 1839-41. Refused Simonides access to the monastery library 1851-2.

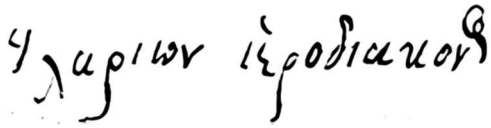
Interviewed by Antonin concerning the 'Simonides Affair'.

Hilarion. Greek hierodeacon. Born Ioannis Georgiou (surname unknown) in 1810, in Platamónas, diocese of Salonica. Lodged with Athanasius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and then with Meletius, Metropolitan of Thessalonica. Entered the St Panteleimon Monastery in 1837. Deputy to hegumen Gerasim. Very close to the Greek hierodeacon Benedict. Knew Simonides' activities 1839-41. Died June 30, 1886.



Interviewed by Antonin concerning the 'Simonides Affair'.

Signature of Ἱλαριων ἱεροδιακονος:



'Mentioned among the witnesses to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides about the forgery of the Sinai manuscript of the Bible.'

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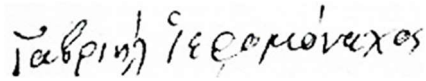
Savvas. Greek hieromonk and confessor for St Panteleimon. 'Witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides about the forgery of the Sinai manuscript Bible.'

Nikiforos. 'Witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides about the forgery of the Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible'.

Dorotheos, hieromonk. 'Witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides regarding the forgery of the Sinai manuscript of the Bible'.

Gabriel. Bulgarian hieromonk. Born Georgi Efremov (surname unknown) in 1819 in Vrontu, diocese of Serres. Younger brother to Ioannikki (see below). Entered St Panteleimon monastery in 1838. Died October 21, 1898.

'Cited as a witness to the falsity of the testimony of the Greek Simonides about the forgery of the Sinai manuscript of the Bible.' 

Misael. 'A witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides about the forgery of the Sinaitic Codex of the Bible'.

Filaret. Bulgarian lay monk. Born c. 1796. Entered St Panteleimon in 1836. His obedience was archondarial, so he served as the monastery's archondarius, i.e. one responsible for hosting all visitors (which would have included Simonides in both 1839-41 and his return visit in 1851-2). Died July 8, 1876.

'Witness of the falsity of the statement of the Greek Simonides about the forgery of the Sinai manuscript Bible.'

Dositheos. Greek lay monk. 'Witness concerning the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides regarding the forgery of the Sinai manuscript of the Bible.'

Agapios. Greek lay monk. Born 1807 in the Ottoman Empire [island of Leros, Diocese of Kos?]. Entered St Panteleimon in 1833. Died September 28, 1891.

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Savvas. Greek lay monk. Born in 1797 in Caesarea, Cappadocia (now Kayseri, Turkey). Given name Simeon. Came to Mount Athos in 1818. During the revolt in the 1820s he lived for 9 years in Morea, after which he settled in the monastery of St Anna on Athos. Removed to St Panteleimon Monastery in 1840. Died April 3, 1873.

Avramios. Greek lay monk. Born 1813 in Sitena, diocese of Kynouria. Entered St Panteleimon in 1840. Died August 27, 1891.

'Certifies, among other things, the falsity of the testimony of K. Simonides about the forgery of the Sinaitic Codex of the Bible.'

Ioanniki. Bulgarian lay monk. Born 1815 in Vrontu, diocese of Serres. Older brother to hieromonk Gabriel (see above). Entered St Panteleimon 1836. Cell attendant of Prokopios Dendrinos for a year. Died May 6, 1900.[171]

'A witness to the falsity of the testimony of the Greek Simonides regarding the forgery of Sinaitic manuscripts of the Bible.'

Gregori. Bulgarian lay monk. 'A witness to the falsehood of the statements of the Greek Simonides regarding the forgery of Sinaitic manuscripts of the Bible.'

Sofroni. Bulgarian lay monk. 'A witness to the falsity of Simonides' statement about the forgery of the Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible.'

Maxim. Bulgarian lay monk. Born 1796 in Manastirzik,[172] diocese of Nevrokop. Entered St Panteleimon in 1840. Died January 10, 1882, aged 85.

'A witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides about the forgery of the Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible.'

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[171] He is listed as ethnically Bulgarian in the letter. Serres (contested by Bulgaria, and sometimes part of it) had a large Bulgarian population. 'Greek' simply meant an Orthodox Christian in the Ottoman Empire, which the brothers were, though ethnically Bulgarian. The same applies to hegumen Gerasim: he was ethnically Bulgarian but, as an Orthodox Christian from the Ottoman empire, he was also a Greek.

[172] Turkish name, Greek Μοναστηρτζίκ. The village is now abandoned and uninhabited.

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Ieronim. Russian hieromonk. Confessor. Born Ivan Pavlovich Solomentsov on June 28, 1802 in Stary Oskol, Russia. Entered Athos in 1836, and moved to St Panteleimon at the invitation of the Russian brothers there in November 1840 in place of hieromonk confessor Pavel (Paul), who had died in the August. He discipled Macarius, who succeeded Gerasim as hegumen on the latter's death in 1875. Ieronim died November 14, 1885.

He actively participated in the management of the monastery. Knew Simonides and his activities intimately, and helped Prokopios Dendrinos remove him in 1841.

Interviewed by Antonin concerning the 'Simonides Affair'.

'A witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides regarding the forgery of the Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible.' Іеромонахъ Іеронимъ

Ezekiel. Russian hieromonk. Born Ignatius Vasilievich Slivkin in 1810 in Kashira, Tula province, Russia. Entered Athos 1832, first at Zografou, then Ilyinski skete. Entered St Panteleimon in 1836. Died June 23, 1884.

His autobiographical diary is extant.

Interviewed by Antonin concerning the 'Simonides Affair'.

Іеромонахъ Іезекіиль

Gerontius. Russian lay monk. Born Georgy Fedorovich Zvonkin in Kiev. Resident at St Panteleimon. Died August 20, 1865.

'Witness to the falsity of the statements of the Greek Simonides regarding the forgery of the Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible.'

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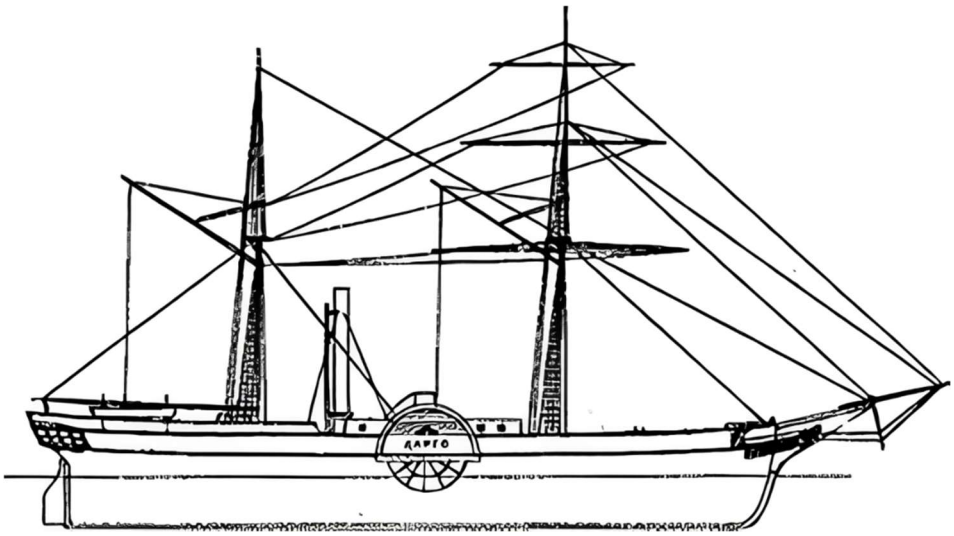
APPENDIX 2



'Dargo' ('Rusalka' was identical)

The vessels of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (РОПиТ/ROPiT) serving the Constantinople to St Panteleimon monastery route were the *Rusalka* ('Mermaid') and the *Lastochka* ('Swallow'), formerly the *Andia* and the *Dargo* respectively. These vessels had been purchased in 1857 by ROPiT from the Novorussiya Expedition and re-named.

The *Andia* and the *Dargo* were identical sister ships built in 1846 at the William and Benjamin Wallis shipyard, Blackwall Yard, London. They had the following specifications:

Displacement: 257 tons. Wooden hulls.

Dimensions: length 39.6 m, width 6.2 m, draft 2.54 m.

Top speed: 7.5 knots.

Two Seaward and Capel steam engines, one copper tubular steam boiler developing a total of 100 hp.

On April 10, 1854 during the Crimea War, an Anglo-French fleet bombarded Odessa harbour. *Andia* (later re-named *Rusalka*) was holed in 16 places and caught fire. To avoid total loss she was deliberately scuttled by the crew in 3.3 metres of water. She was raised on April 25 and repaired.

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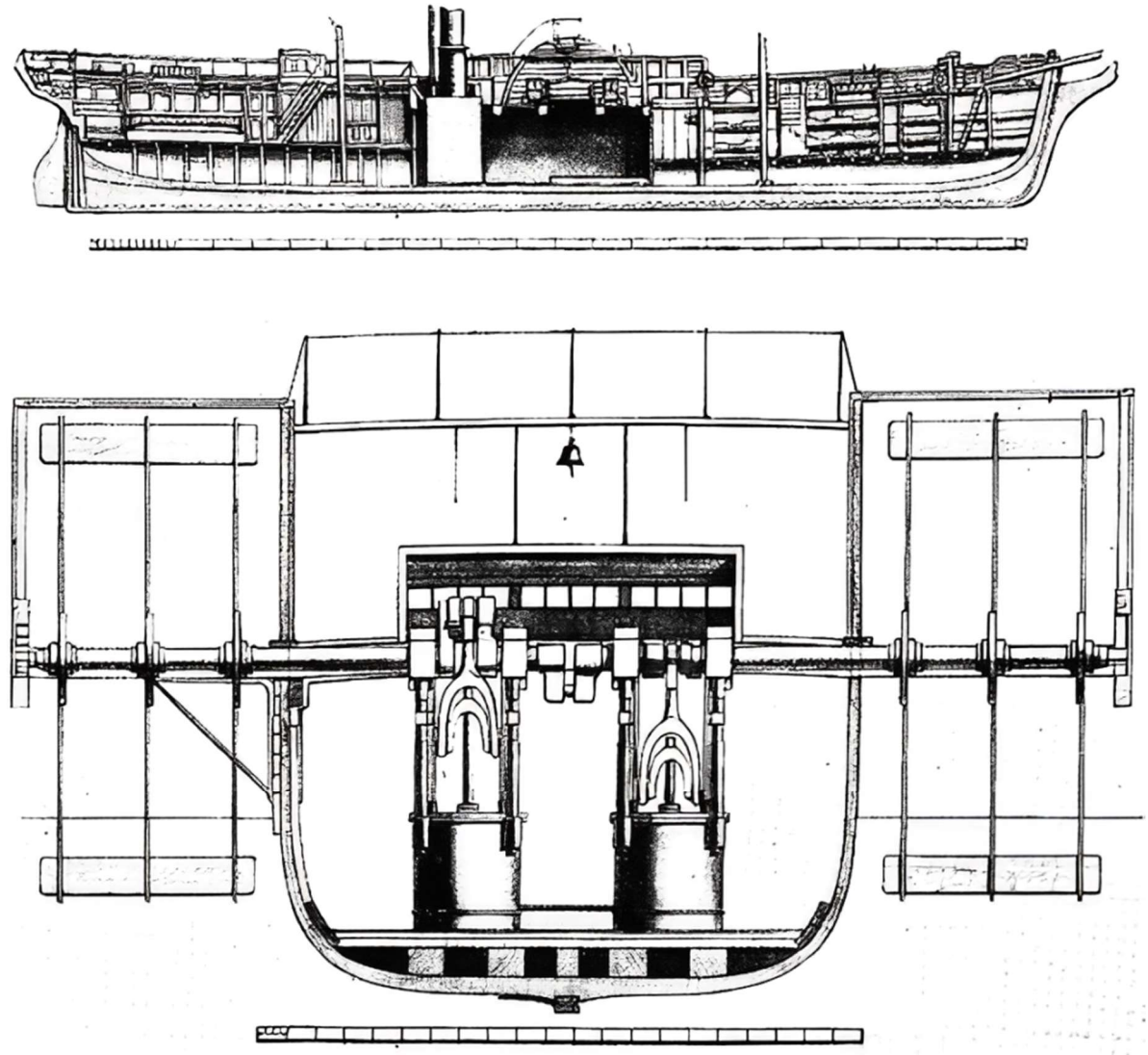

Sections midship and engine: Rusalka *and* Lastochka

In 1857 *Andia* and *Dargo* were sold to the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company and renamed *Rusalka* and *Lastochka* respectively. They operated on the Black Sea routes from Odessa to Constantinople, and from Constantinople to Salonica, with stops as required at Mount Athos.

Rusalka and *Lastochka* were retired from passenger service and converted into barges in 1868 and 1865 respectively.

Porphyrius Uspensky wrote two leaflets in 1860 for the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company entitled 'A look at the voyage of our steamships to the shores of Athos'.[173]

[173] P. Uspensky, *Взгляд на плавание наших пароходов к берегам Афона // Листок русского общества пароходства и торговли* № 77, 78 (Odessa, 1860).

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Postscript

There remains a great deal to be done to correct falsehoods, misunderstandings, and gaps in understanding and knowledge concerning Codex Sinaiticus, though very much has already been done that lies unpublished. In particular we intend to address the following in due course (D.V.):

1. The existence of *five* book depositories within St Catherine's monastery during the mid-nineteenth century, their locations and contents, and who saw them and when (Tischendorf saw only two of them).
2. Exactly what portion of Codex Sinaiticus Tischendorf saw in his 1844 visit, including proof that he did not see 129 leaves of the Codex (this claim is copied and repeated by almost every scholar, but has no basis in fact).
3. A reconstruction of how and why Tischendorf made off with 43 leaves in 1844, and why not more or fewer.
4. The utter implausibility that Tischendorf would have been permitted by Kyrillos the librarian to cut out and take 43 leaves of a parchment uncial manuscript of the LXX, or that it was 'rescued' by Tischendorf from the furnace. By 1844 Kyrillos had been cataloguing the manuscripts for 4 years already, and it is recorded how far he had got to.
5. Analysis of the development of Tischendorf's narratives, embodying increasingly romantic and fictitious elements as a result of psychological weakness, and not necessarily conscious fabrication (the '129 leaves' and 'parchments destined for the furnace' are two glaring examples).
6. Further demonstration from original letters that 'Kallinikos Hieromonachos' was a creation of Constantine Simonides.
7. Russian employment of Constantine Simonides, and the political utility to the Russians of the 'Simonides Affair' playing out in England.
8. Porphyrius Uspensky's analysis of Codex Sinaiticus, including his remarks concerning the medieval monks who scrawled personal comments in the codex (Hilarion, Theophylactos, and Dionysios).
9. English translation of the whole of Uspensky's 'Opinion' *Мнение о Синайской рукописи* of 1862.
10. An analysis of the ending of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus.
11. The provenance of Codex Sinaiticus – not from within the Church.
12. Codex Sinaiticus – as originally written an unreliable witness to the text then received in the Church.
13. Age – fifth century more likely than fourth.

And much more.

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